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THE PARADOX OF LIFE.

THE PARADOX OF LIFE

OR,

CHRISTIAN KOHELETH.

A Poem.

WITH A SHEAF OF SACRED SONNETS
AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

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THE PARADOX OF LIFE ;

OR,

CHRISTIAN KOHELETH.

THE subject proposed, in reply to a despondingly anxious young friend, perplexed by the book *Koheleth, or Ecclesiastes* of Solomon, the original author (as I believe, notwithstanding modern critics) of that profound treatise, whatever scribe may in any subsequent age have arranged Solomon's thoughts in the canon. The aphorism that *all is vanity*, has a true and appropriate sense in relation to the time and state of fallen man, but has also practical limits. It does not forbid the pursuit of happiness, nor prove happiness unattainable, nor infringe on the goodness or wisdom of God. It helps to regulate that pursuit, and direct to its attainment, in subjection to the Divine Will. It is proved true

in respect of the scientific infidels—Agnostics and Positivists; also of self-indulgent sensualists and debauchees, as well as of avaricious wealth worshippers, and the vulgar crowd of mere party politicians. Rising higher, it brands the loftiest and most successful ambition, instancing the Emperor Charles the Fifth as a conspicuous proof. The source of disappointment in all these cases traced to the fallen condition of man, who seeks happiness apart from God. But this being admitted, it is objected that the good and wise, and their pursuits and designs, are also subject to vanity. The answer is, that the revelation of the fall of man, of a future state, and of a condition of probation here for that state alone supplies the solution. Instance of a patient sufferer attaining happiness, present and prospective, in the most painful circumstances long endured—the story of Lucy a true one. Noble conduct of a British officer hunting in Chinese Tartary—an incident founded in fact. Allusion to the English lady nurses in the hospitals of the Crimean War, exhibiting the practical power of faith and virtue. A condemnation of war, but a justification of legitimate war as being sometimes necessary, and so the promoter of manly virtue is noted. The result of all is that Love and Faith can extract the

sting from mundane vanity, and that obedience to God's commandments and trust in the Redeemer, with the sure hope of eternal joy, prove the blessedness of doing good, and solve the paradox of life.



TO AN ANXIOUS YOUNG FRIEND.



I.


NO, not to youth's bright prime should it be given
To antedate dull age by needless fears;
For, as the kindly atmosphere of heaven,
With varying tints adorns the grove it sears,
Time can touch softly Life's autumnal years,
And thought receive a seasonable hue
Of pensiveness that is not sad, though tears,
Mingling with happy memories, renew
Their tender life, like night's refreshing dew.

II.

It may be thus in after years to thee,
When on thy heart fond recollections throng
Of joys—perchance more sweet to memory
Than when the hours danced gladsomely along
All golden haired, and breathing love and song.
Leave then to Time his proper work; but now
Kind Providence and Nature suffer wrong
When over-wisdom's unproductive plough
Furrows too soon the smoothness of the brow.

THE PARADOX OF LIFE.



EEM it not strange if I have said to thee
With Solomon that all is vanity—
And that the yearning heart and earnest mind
Nor satisfaction here nor rest can find,
Yet urged thee, notwithstanding, to adorn 5
Thy path with roses though they hide a thorn,
To dive for pearls of knowledge though they sleep
Dark fathoms down in Nature's guardian deep,
With joy on the sweet morning star to gaze,
Though lost so soon in morning's saffron blaze, 10
And taste a child's delight while Noah's bow
Lends the storm cloud its rich but fleeting glow.
Yes! life is precious though it be but breath,
And Autumn tints are beautiful through death,
And joys exulting strains are wont to borrow 15
Rich pathos from the melody of sorrow,
And blossoms falling perish not but give
A higher life to fruits in which they live.
Nor less thy heart's experiences can be

The fragrant germs of ripe felicity. 20
Then thankful for the bliss each hour may bring,
Though with the hour still swiftly on the wing,
Let us in Reason's sacred balance poise
The worth of mortal and immortal joys.
Let not dull cowardice the scale depress, 25
With thankless sigh at life's poor nothingness,
Nor false hope flattering with vain dreams delude
The cheated heart, whose wakening shock is rude
When the bright bubbles it hath doated on
Bursting, the loveliness of life seems gone. 30
Nay, be it ours this paradox to trace,
To pierce delusion's sinuous hiding place;
Drag into day the counterfeits of joy,
Adjust the gold's legitimate alloy.
The true intent of Solomon discern,* 35
The true instruction of Experience learn,
That vanity is God's fit scourge for fools,
Truant from wisdom's noble training schools;
While virtue's thorniest paths have loveliest flowers,
Whose fruit exuberates in happy bowers, 40
Where satisfaction dwells, and we shall prove
That Life had meaning and that God is Love.

Of multitudes who echo David's son,

The thoughts are various while the words seem one,
So in his true conclusion we concur, 45
But to their groundless premises demur.
That proud scientist who denies or doubts
A living God, and sceptically flouts
Because this wondrous universe contains
Problems too hard for his aspiring brains; 50
Or while supernal Truth he disbelieves,
Trusts his own atom wisdom, and conceives
That bubbles, self-begot, by process slow
But marked, did unto lovely Cosmos grow
Without the will of a presiding mind,* 55
Unmanaged, unprepared, and undesigned,
While ages by the milliard if you grant,
And but a monad, he no more shall want
God to eliminate and clear explain
How Ape-descended man was made in vain; 60
Him we must leave to the poor cuckoo cry,
That all, ev'n his sad self, is vanity.
For, surely, 'mongst the vainest of vain things
Are such preposterous imaginings;
And if creation we must needs abandon, 65
Lest Miracle should find a leg to stand on,
If wise contrivance we must quite deny,
Let Cosmos demonstrate a Deity.

If eyes were not designed to see, yet still
Perform sight's work with wondrously blind skill, 70
One test phenomenon — himself — remains,
Which nothing short of miracle explains,
Or curse judicial whose avenging rule,
Developed so profoundly skilled a fool,*
Whose astute failure to give truth the lie, 75
Completes the proof of Teleology.

But hold! a new phenomenon appears,
The moral atheist of favoured years,
Unconscious haply that from Christ he steals
What grains of truth his system half conceals, 80
And that he but reverberates the cry,
Of Cretan sages, eat and drink and die.
Not he the vulgar ribald that of yore
Against himself barred every decent door,
Nor the lewd scoffer, whose malicious mock 85
By brilliant wit conveyed its poisonous shock,
But boasting to disclose the hidden rule,
Of virtue, and build up Truth's loftiest school.
With high pretence and professorial air,
He occupies the philosophic chair. 90
As from within his web the spider weaves,
No grace this sophist needs, and none receives;

Himself the God and fount of his own good,
He nowhere yields praise, prayer, or gratitude,
But with spontaneous bounty, as the rose 95
Sheds her perfume and beauty, he bestows,
Unmotivated benefits with high disdain
Of hoped reward, as mean alike and vain.
For the firm base of this transcendent code
Is laid the postulate, There is no God! 100
Thence no eternal life, no heaven, no hell,
No world beyond the tomb; yet sooth to tell,
From these negations this grand Phoenix springs,
And shakes the ashes from her glorious wings;
Exulting that religion, hope, and faith, 105
Lie crushed for ever in the dust of death,
The martyrs proved weak idiots of all time,
Poor victims of a phrenesy sublime,
Their virtues but a varied mode of self,
Moved by the lure of spiritual pelf, 110
Their praised example a pernicious snare,
A bait that tempts to ruin and despair.
Surely ere goodness springs from such dead root,
Thorns shall yield grapes, and thistles figs for fruit,
Thought undergo a transformation strange, 115
And language modified denote the change,
A holy heaven awake impure desire,

Annihilation generous deeds inspire,
To shun the future mark the manly mind,
To clutch the present prove self all refined, 120
Wisdom and truth to Bedlam meekly hie,
And madness mouth Divine philosophy.

But pass these learnedly insane disputings,
Futile and dismal as the night owl's hootings,
That in some churchyard old with ruin spread 125
Haunts with dull moans the mansions of the dead.
And mark who next usurps upon this stage,
The robes and sceptre of the Hebrew sage,
With faltering footsteps tottering to life's goal,
Feeble of body desolate in soul, 130
The aged wreck of a long mispent day,
Or monument of premature decay.
Alas! with too sad truth dost thou complain,
Thou aching heart, that all to thee proved vain,
Gone like the bubbles that careering swim, 135
A moment madly round the goblet's brim.
The cup is drained the dregs alone are thine,
The song hath ceased, the lights no longer shine,
The withered flowers not now sweet fragrance shed,
The hall is emptiness, the guests are fled, 140
The crackling laugh of fools ascends no more,

Thou didst make life a revel—and 'tis o'er.
Yet midst the roses covertly was hidden,
In temporary sleep a guest unbidden,
But uneschewable—whose bite of fire 145
Endures when all the vanities retire,
Leaving thee helpless to the coiling clasp,
Of fell remorse, that never-dying asp,
Whose hiss through long eternity shall ring
Detestable companion to the sting ; 150
While memory, too, faithful to her trust,
Recalls the duties trampled in the dust,
The talents misemployed or idly lost,
Wisdom's kind teachings to the wild winds tost,
Fair opportunities for ever past, 155
And folly's well earned wages paid at last,
In vain self-reprobation, and regret
As vain,—when judgment's final seal is set.

Who pity feels if yon mean wretch lament
The vanity of things, whose life was spent 160
All concentrate in despicable self
While cumulating hoards of unused pelf?
Sum to sum adding, piling store on store,
Though the starved soul grew leaner evermore,
Where the moth fattened and the rust enjoyed, 165

As lawful prey the treasure it destroyed.
Fit retribution. Nor need wonder rise
If low ambition miss the heavenly prize,
And vanity infest the selfish chace
Of popular applause and pride of place, 170
The party politician's mural crown,
When, treading rival after rival down,
He mounts the breach of transitory power,
Flushed with the triumph of a little hour,
As if such tinsel wreath were sterling gold, 175
The patriot's crown, that ne'er was bought or sold.
But if a doubt intrude that loftier things
In camps and courts of conquerors and kings
The talismanic potency may possess
The magic art to satisfy and bless, 180
Imparting to the sons of pomp and pride
The happiness to humbler hearts denied
And falsifying Heav'n itself—behold
Imperial Charles, that gorgeous head of gold
Crested with many crowns, whose high estate 185
Rose built so strong by Providence or Fate,
Realm to realm adding, after Austria led,
Burgundia's heiress to the marriage bed
Fruitful of Kingdoms; but did Charles attain
The secret prize? Nay! though united Spain, 190

Castile with Arragon, owned him as Lord,
And in his lap her Eldorado poured,
Though transatlantic empires kissed his rod
And Europe hung upon the Austrian nod,
The sure experience came, that man's deep need 195
Surpasses far Ambition's wealthiest meed,
That vast dominions vast vexations bring,
And multitudinous masters rule the King.
But the sad bargain binds, and hope is vain
The basely bartered birthright to regain ; 200
Though the void heart indignant at her loss
Loathe and disdain the unavailing dross.
So, while the nations puzzled and amazed
On the strange deed incredulously gazed,
With stately pomp, Charles solemnly resigned 205
All that so fondly fascinates mankind,
And firm in fixed resolve laid proudly down
The burden of his multifarious crown,
To learn that ne'er comes back the dove to rest,
By guilt and pride once banished from the breast. 210
The barren sequel let Plazencia tell,
The living death of the monastic cell,
Fast, vigil, mass, will-worship's dismal train,
The futile hope thus holiness to gain [215
The bloodstained scourge, as if just Heaven were blind,

And for flesh-scathings pardoned sins of mind,
The mazy round by superstition trod,
That never brought a soul more nigh to God.
So the lost voyager on 'Texas' plain,
Seeking his gone companions to regain, 220
With joy a recent horse's track espied,
And followed eagerly the welcome guide ;
Fatigued and hungry at the close of day
Fresh traces cheered his solitary way,
And thankful to have found the beaten course, 225
He snatched a brief repose for self and horse.
Up ere the sun he galloped as before,
Intently gazing on the prairie floor,
Where multiplying footprints onward lured,
And speedy succour more and more assured. 230
But ah ! with faltered hope and failing strength,
The thunderbolt conviction flashed at length—
'Twas his own charger's ever-circling track
To his first starting point had brought him back.

Yes ! husks may nourish swine, and children
find 235

Delight in baubles ; so it is designed,
But never shall the God-giv'n Spirit rest,
Short of its origin content or blest.

Awhile beguiled, it may, misled, pursue
Cheats evanescent as the morning dew, 240
Or dream, and wake amazed as each stript lust
Lets fall a mask and stares all death and dust.
Sweet Paradise held but one fatal tree,
The rest from every taint of ill were free;
But a world now corrupted at the root, 245
Teems a rank wilderness of poison fruit,
And, groaning under the judicial curse,
Reveals lost Eden's terrible reverse,
While gloriously alone the Living Vine
Still vindicates the ownership divine, 250
Though, as if foul Enchantments mocked the ground,
Myriads of lust-attracting fruits abound
All fair, all false, and falsest when most fair,
As the bait tempts most keenly nigh the snare.
Yet all the Maker's works are fair as when 255
He named them "Good,"—the evil is in men.
The pure heart from its treasures hath power
To gather sweets as the bee taps the flower,
But if with poison sin the fount imbue,
Delights are death like honey from the yew. 260
Thus is it with the base, the bad, the proud,
And light frivolity's delirious crowd,
'Till disappointments keen instruction bring,

Or violated conscience whets her sting ;
When, haply, rank Rebellion's murmurings rise, 265
And Earth's mean worm Heaven's Equity denies,
Demanding wherefore objects of delight
Should stir desire, while some mysterious spite
Lurks vigilant to punish or destroy
If man obey his instincts to seek joy. 270
Such burglar logic marks perverted mind,
Through sad impiety and passion blind,
As if a neighbour's house, and jails, and laws,
Were of a felon's guilt the guilty cause,
Or the Good Maker had not ruled alone, 275
But with the Lord of Evil, shared the throne,
A dual God ; whence, Manichean feign,
Sprung the dark mystery of sin and pain.
Away with these, the harvest shews the seed,
Or golden corn, or rank adulterate weed. 280
The tree is good or evil at the root,
And sorrow is of sin the native fruit.
We do not marvel then that peace should fly
The paths of folly and impiety,
Or that, when Life's probation term is o'er, 285
The lost their sad insanity deplore ;
Too late discerning at the bitter end
That the Creator is the creature's friend,

Whose gentle laws in wisdom are designed
By silken cords to draw the willing mind 290
In holy freedom, only love constrained,
To purity and Paradise regained.
But when the holy and the wise declare,
In serious sadness, though not in despair,
That man at his most glorious state, Alas! 295
Is but as the frail blossom of the grass
In the sweet freshness of the dewy morning,
Green earth with beauty and delights adorning,
Cut down and withered ere the evening star
Mounts the horizon in her silver car, 300
His joys, like summer clouds, fleet as the shadow
That undulates across a wind-swept meadow,
His busy schemes of hope, but vigour wasted,
Thirsting for crystal streams that never tasted,
Fail like the mirage of the wilderness, 305
That glares to mock and aggravate distress,
While, as a tale still hurrying to its close,
Life ere the end admits no calm repose.
When goodness and experience thus discourse,
And thoughts of deep significance enforce, 310
Excited in contemplating the plan,
Of God's great mystery regarding man,
Far be from us the disobedient ear,

Barred against truth by prejudice or fear,
But to sound reason and the Word Divine, 315
Let the calmed heart, and patient thought incline.
So may we shun the fatal rocks and shoals,
Bestrewn with broken hearts and ruined souls,
Steer our bark safely to its wished for home,
Use right the life that is, and that to come, 320
Lay hold of with such energy of faith,
As gains both worlds, and treads the neck of death.

Ah! say'st thou 'tis well, nurst in their schools
Of pride, or vice, let Atheistic fools,
Sots, slaves, and tyrants, selfish, sensual, base, 325
Ignoble souls, humanity's disgrace
And Heaven's abhorrence, who pervert the end
Of man's existence, and to dust descend,
So that their very memories do rot,
Or only live in curse, if unforgot— 330
'Tis well—let such teach ignominiously
The bane of sin, whether they live or die.
But wherefore must more worthy souls complain
That in their best estate all things are vain,
That disappointment, dogging enterprise, 335
Mars noblest aims and baffles plans most wise,
Of her just meed industrious patience spoils

Bold ingenuity perversely foils,
Hope's lawful blooms blights by some envious breath,
Levels young beauty in the dust of death, 340
And at the moment when it stoops to sip,
Dashes the joy-cup from the quivering lip ;
Nay worse, the blossom unto fruit may grow,
The filled cup to its haven overflow,
Success appear to crown long toil and skill, 345
The finished fabric its design fulfil,
Yet, as a canker in the loveliest blossom,
Dissatisfaction gnaw the inner bosom,
And, the heart cheated, heave the wondering sigh,
Which tells that in fruition joy doth die. 350
Or if that bitter lore be yet untaught,
That new delusions must anew be sought,
Wish piled on wish, as dream breeds dream in sleep,
Till at the touch of light we wake and weep.

I smile, my friend ; but granted that the good, 355
Though common sharers of Adamic blood,
Can not make Earth their Heaven if they would
Be so content, they would not if they could.
Pilgrims of Hope, they seek their home above,
Yet lack not journeying mercies as they move. 360
For disappointments wisely well prepared,

By visionary, vain hopes unensnared,
But feeling their mortality, they wait
'Till their appointed change, and moderate
Their wishes for delight: if good be given 365
They lift their hearts in breathing thanks to Heaven;
If griefs o'ercast their sunny sky they know,
As clouds drop riches, joys from sorrow flow,
And that the school of suffering can impart
Strength and contentment to the meek of heart, 370
Who, unreluctant, own the wise decree
Of discipline that eyes Eternity.
Approach we, then, this paradox, nor fear
Discords in God's grand harmony to hear,
But let us ponder boldly, cast around 375
A glance contemplative, then dive profound
Into thine own emotions, while beholding
Ages and generations still unfolding
Their dismal catalogues of human woe
And death, see how like passing shadows go 380
Into dark nothingness the good, the bad,
The beautiful, the base, the bright, the sad,
States, empires, arts, religions, firmly built
By patient wisdom or unshrinking guilt.
All alike vanish! So thy glassy tide, 385
Great ocean, bears in beauty and in pride

The grand and graceful argosies that sweep
Defiantly thy subjugated deep
Awhile—until the sea-floor darkly heaves,
And as a giant hurling harvest sheaves 390
Grim tempest gladdening, 'midst wreck, roar, and foam,
Gathers the wealth to his insatiate home.
Yes! all-obliterating ruin moves
Resistless, and unvanquished victor proves
In the unceasing contest; yet recall 395
Thy soul to courage, nor let aught appal,
For the true safety-lamp is faith divine,
And mysteries disperse if this be thine,
And out night's deepest darkness springs the ray
That shall shine onward to meridian day. 400

The skilled anatomist who views one bone
Of some vast fossil monster now unknown,
That trod archaic earth, or stemmed the flood,
Or haunted estuarian reeds and mud,
Amphibious, in those million rolling ages 405
Recorded on Geology's dark pages,
Can from that scrap conjecture and describe
The form, bulk, habits, species and tribe,
And in its full entirety restore
The giant skeleton that lived of yore. 410

Such science, by true instinct of the mind,
Grasps what the eternal reason has designed,
And wrought thro' ages by unchanging laws,
That demonstrate the ever present cause.
'Tis faith in Nature's oneness treads this road, 415
Where Piety might guide to Nature's God.
But if true science such result can reach,
And old earth's depths heav'n's power and wisdom
preach,
His Spirit moving on a humble heart,
Far deeper, sweeter, knowledge can impart. 420
That old world perished! while diviner power
Than shines in earth or sky in star or flower,
Is manifest in work that doth not die,
When a loved child of immortality
Receives his polish as a priceless gem, 425
To coruscate on Glory's diadem.
In savage estimate bright beads of glass
Chaste pearl and brilliant diamond may surpass;
And, doating on false gauds, the earthly mind
To spiritual beauty live stone blind. 430
But HE who of true value takes true measure
The meek and quiet heart regards with pleasure,
As a rich jewel of intrinsic worth,
That pours contempt on prouder things of earth,

And angels bending watch with pure delight 435
The lovely tints unfolding to their sight,
As grace on grace adorns the sister-flower,
They wait to carry to its heavenly bower.

Look where a jasmine-covered cottage stands
Hard by the margin of the yellow sands, 440
And the health-giving breezes fresh and free
Stir the sweet music of the summer sea,
Thither a suffering one is borne to try
The renovating air—perchance to die.
For thirty years in helplessness and pain 445
That wasted form on its poor couch had lain,
A dingy chamber was her dwelling, where
The skylight scant admitted light and air.
No sights or songs of nature came to cheer
The dull monotony of eye and ear; 450
While knitting lace upon her weary bed,
Her feeble fingers earned her daily bread,
And teaching little children, she repaid
Her kindly neighbour's necessary aid.
Was she then desolate? Oh no! 'twas given 455
To her to know the presence that makes Heaven,
And, in the dearth of outward joys, her heart
Embraced tenaciously the better part.

So waxed her spirit stronger day by day,
While the flesh gently yielding to decay, 460
Loosened those fond entanglements that bind
To this our lower life the heavenward mind.
But, if revealed by Faith's celestial lens,
Surpassing joys eclipse the things of sense,
If earth grow but a prison house of pain, 465
Life a sore burthen, death a priceless gain,
How do not murmurs of impatience rise
With longing aspirations to the skies?
Or dark doubts of the Father's loving care
Dishearten gratitude and slacken prayer? 470
Nay, precious gold by fire is purified,
And Faith, more precious far, must needs be tried,
And silver in the crucible doth lie,
Watched by the skilled Refiner's careful eye,
'Till his own face seen clear in the pure ore, 475
The finished treasure needs the fire no more.
So Lucy, trusting in the Father's love,
Sealed by the secret earnest of the Dove,
With thankful acquiescence in her lot,
Cherished her comforts and her griefs forgot. 480
Grasping the precious promises that tell
Of Glory and of joy unspeakable,
She meekly waited her appointed hour,

Patient of Trial's purifying power,
And her heart owned with silent gratitude 485
That never had she lacked her daily food,
Sustaining life while she was ever fed
All bountifully with the living bread.
But pain and strict confinement brought at length
Drooping vivacity and failing strength, 490
And to save life, by kind advice and aid,
To the sea-side the sufferer was conveyed.
Willing to live, though well prepared to die,
She grateful kissed the hand of Charity,
When the so long lost charm of seas and skies 495
And trees and flowers re-opened Paradise.

The caged lark who escapes to liberty
Exulting soars, shaking the echoing sky;
And Earth, that felt the prisoner's wanton wrong,
Looks lovelier 'neath the little warbler's song. 500
But there is joy the human heart may feel,
Nor tuneful notes nor language can reveal,
On perfect beauty we enraptured gaze
In silence, the true eloquence of praise,
The calm quiescence of profound emotion; 505
For stormiest gales stir not the depths of ocean,
Though the light zephyrs of a summer day

Waft a glad skiff on pleasure's sunny way.
Evening stole softly on her new retreat
With breath of rose and honeysuckle sweet, 510
When, faint and weary, Lucy made request
Awhile in the fresh open-air to rest.
The birds their grateful evensong were singing,
The beach with low-hushed melody was ringing
Where on the yellow sands, glowing like gold, 515
The emerald tide its fringe of silver rolled.
The sun beneath the burning west had dipt,
And the last clouds with fading crimson tipt,
While up the silent sky Night's graceful Queen
With her attendant Star smiling serene, 520
Saluted the departing Lord of day,
And soothed creation with her silver ray.
Like one who dreams, enchanted and amazed
Upon th' unwonted glories, Lucy gazed,
As if a mystic veil in twain had riven, 525
And she had reached the vestibule of Heaven.
No forms angelic, such as Jacob saw
At ancient Luz, oppressed her soul with awe ;
But here she felt was Bethel, in this place
Smiled forth Love's own all-animating face. 530
Sun, moon, and star, and sea, and birds, and flowers
Shone to her heart with more than angel powers,

For she thought not of creatures, but in them
Viewed Him enrobed, and touched His garment's hem,
Thrilling with health and joy ; Dear Lord, she
sighed, 535

How beautiful thou art ! and, sighing, died.
Nay she died not, her deathless hour had come,
And her rapt Spirit reached its destined home,
As by the touch of an Enchanter's rod,
Absorbed from dust and throbbing into God. 540
Glowing on Aaron's heart each sacred stone
Flashed blending lustre o'er the mystic zone,
Distinct in splendour, as each lovely blossom
Studs the rich girdle of earth's jewelled bosom.
So God's true gems, precious by Grace Divine, 545
A galaxy of boundless beauty shine,
The Spirit each adorning as He will,
It's lot in the grand glory to fulfil.

Where Himalayan peaks the skies ascend,
And never-melting snows the paths defend, 550
A wanderer gazing from the Tartar plain,
Demands of heaven why man was made in vain.
"Here horrid ice and everlasting rock
"With senseless force our impotency mock.
"While we, like passing vapours melt, they stand 555

"From age to age imperishably grand.

"How then shall earth's proud master boast mankind

"Superior in the majesty of mind,

"While scorched, yet shivering in the icy blast,

"This ground he lords shall cover him at last." 560

Like the hid murmur in an ocean shell,

Such thoughts unwise his bosom darkly swell,

But with response like oracle Divine,

His better spirit whispers from its shrine.

"Hush! would'st thou grasp a particle of dust 565

"And say, to be like thee is all my trust;

"Or to the noblest of thy kind impute

"Intelligence inferior to the brute.

"For if God's heroes be as fools contemned,

"Whence came those sentiments by which they
stemmed 570

"The torrent force of self? Why should men prize

"As good and godlike, grand self-sacrifice,

"And praise the noble host of martyrs, when

"They are of all most miserable men,

"The victims of a lie, if all end here? 575

"Nay! Christ the true ideal we revere,

"Of wisely suffering generosity;

"And feel that Paul or Howard cannot die

"But ever live, in human hearts enshrined

"The ornament and glory of mankind, 580

"Sure witnesses to earth that they in heaven

"Shine with that beauty there, which thence was given."

As night mists flee before morn's gladdening face,

Truth clears the soul from shadows cold and base,

The secret breath of heaven the heart inspires 585

Re-animating virtue's flagging fires.

Nor lags occasion—to the traveller's ear

Float unaccustomed cries of grief or fear.

His faithful rifle with cool care he eyes

In readiness for danger or surprise, 590

Till round the point of a projecting crag

Their prey two Tartar spoilers roughly drag

Destined for slavery, a youth and maiden

In bridal guise attired, with jewels laden.

Wedded that morn and journeying with their train, 595

Who fled surprised and scattered o'er the plain;

These to the leader as his prize were given,

Preserved from death, but to worse horrors driven.

A moment paused the Briton, then with hand

Uplifted, spoke in voice of stern command. 600

But shall the tiger, mad with tasted blood,

Be in his hour of mastery withstood?

Who dares the perilous attempt essay

From his red jaws to wrench the destined prey?

With outstretched spear one robber spurs his horse, 605
To crush th' intruder by a twofold force,
While, with fierce shout and brandished scymitar,
His comrade leaps to end the unequal war.
Well in that trying hour the hunter knew
He could rely upon his rifle true, 610
And in his own sure aim securely trust
To lay both spoilers bleeding in the dust;
But with a generous instinct he withstood
The thought to shed unnecessary blood.
Leaping aside, the spear-point to evade, 615
With strong gun butt he smites the sabre's blade.
The tingling, sharp stroke shivers it like rain,
And fells the Tartar stunned upon the plain;
Then, ere the other can his horse rein round,
Two bullets stretch it lifeless on the ground. 620
The shock, the fall, the crash, his soul confuse,
And piteously for mercy now he sues;
Nor vainly—but that rifle's echoing crack
The scattered caravan hath gathered back.
On the inexplicable scene they gaze 625
With mingled apprehension and amaze.
Round the late lost ones, wond'ringly, they crowd
Who for speech stirred too deeply, wept aloud,
When the deliverer had loosed their chain

And giv'n them life and liberty again. 630

At length the bride by grateful feeling moved,

And for her thought too tardy, self-reproved,

Plucks from her bosom and thick-jewelled hair

A wealth of gems magnificent and rare.

These on their valiant friend in need she presses, 635

And their poor insufficiency confesses,

To mark her heartfelt sense of what she owes

The hand had saved her life from worst of woes ;

Nor less her partner urges her request

With quivering lip and agitated breast. 640

But he whose soul had trodden self to dust

Superior passes by the dazzling lust :

" Princess, thy jewels thee will best adorn,

" I must reject thy gifts, yet not in scorn ;

" But there are things can not be bought and sold, 645

" Nor must blood peril be repaid with gold.

" One boon, however, gladly I demand

" These humbled Tartars, prisoners of my hand,

" I yield to thy attendant's custody

" To pass to their own tribe unscathed and free. 650

" Guilty are they, but fate and race and clime

" May bear the larger burden of their crime,

" And now for Christ's and for fair England's sake,

" Their lives and pardon let them freely take,

“So to their dark hearts and benighted home, 655
“Some blessing with such names perchance may come.”
As on angelic visitant from Heaven,
The Easterns gaze: but the sought pledge is given,
The prisoners with the caravan depart,
And sings the noble Briton’s buoyant heart. 660

Shift now the scene: within that darkened room
A feeble nightlight aggravates the gloom,
With fitful flickering ray that seems to spread
Sad shadows o’er the dying and the dead.
But who with gentle step and placid mien 665
And taper, like a star of hope, is seen
In the deep silence of the midnight hour,
Here where dark Pestilence enthroned in power,
Rivals the woe of battle’s direst slaughters?
’Tis one of England’s luxury-nursed daughters. 670
The ministry of mercy she attends;
Unshrinking o’er the perilous couch she bends,
The cup of consolation to the lips
She kindly presses, and her ’kerchief dips
In ice-chilled vinegar, that the fierce pain 675
Of the scorched brow some solace may obtain,
While gentle words of piety impart
A deeper comfort to the sufferer’s heart.

He who hath watched that work alone can know
The curse and blessing of these realms of woe. 680
Avaunt vain Glory! hide thee in the dust,
The True shines here, self-sacrificing trust.
Detested war! if devils find delight
In the deep thunders of the gory fight,
With fiercer fiendish triumph might they swell, 685
Where hospitals reveal War's nether Hell.
But if one rainbow ray, one heavenly breath,
Could tinge or soothe that shadow vale of death;
If holy angels o'er that ghastly scene
Could stay their flight, some touch of joy serene 690
Might hold them lingering, while from bed to bed,
From night to early morn with patient tread
Through things detestable to every sense,
Through anguished crowds, through reeking pestilence,
Meek and unwearied they that band behold 695
Of England's gentle daughters, not for gold,
Nor praise, but for the joy of doing good,
Confronting horrors that a hero's blood
Might curdle to encounter. Easier far
It were to share the direst field of war— 700
That vile Ambition since Ambition's birth
Hath e'er arrayed to thunderquake sad earth—
Than thus with patient heart and quiet eye

To mark men's mute, heroic agony,
And feel the trickling of a grateful tear,* 705
Wrung from a heart that never blanched with fear —
A richer gem on the kind, nursing hand
Than all Golconda's treasures could command.
Ah! little can the gorgeous East bestow
In that supreme event to all below — 710
When by Eternity's young dawn is seen
That of earth earthy was their dazzling sheen,
And when that dawn has reached meridian day,
When round the Throne is ranged the grand array,
The silent visit to the dying bed, 715
The gentle palm upon the anguished head,
The soothing cup that cooled the fever flame,
The word of comfort spoke in Christ's dear Name,
The multitudinous kindnesses like dew,
That Scutari and Balaklava knew, 720
Shall find their record hath on high been kept,
While in oblivion's dust they here had slept,
And then some tear may shine the richest gem,
In a saint's coronetting diadem.

But giant crime demands an iron rod, 725
And wicked men can be the sword of God,
When the earth groans with violence and wrong,

And the weak cry to Heaven against the strong,
'Tis then in just and necessary wars,
Soldiers earn truly honourable scars, 730
Or for their country nobly dare to die,
When freedom's banner decks her native sky.
Yet could we lift from battle scenes the veil,
Or wake those silent voices, many a tale
Of love and sorrow, penitence and sin, 735
And fond hopes buoyant 'mid the deadly din,
Would wring from firmest hearts a generous sigh,
And tender tear for sad humanity.
By Inkerman's dark field nigh groups of slain,
A soldier wrestles with life's last strong pain, 740
His oozing heartblood crimsons the green sod,
Where his indenting feet had fiercely trod
In the fell death grip; there one little flower
Hath 'scaped unscathed, and in this supreme hour
Its simple presence tenderest thought inspires—* 745
Love strong as death his chilling bosom fires,
And, o'er his soul ere comes the last eclipse,
That iris in his purpling life he dips,
Then with a kiss entrusts it to the hands
Of one who sighs to hear his last commands: 750
"Comrade, words must be few, fate presses on,
"Life's fight is lost, though Inkerman be won;

“But I adjure thee, as my death-bed friend,
“This blood-dyed flower to my dear Mary send—
“It is my last love token, and will tell 755
“My last thought was of her while here—farewell!”
The faithful friend performed the sad behest;
No stone hath marked the warrior’s turfy rest;
But such blood-consecrated flower can never
Fade while hearts beat with love—Love lives for ever. 760

O soul of all the virtues’ gracious source,
Of supreme law that wields no penal force
But moves melodiously the golden strings
Of heavenly harps, and thrills the gladdened wings
Of ministering angels—sad, indeed, 765
Were human hearts and homes without the creed,
And new command more precious than the dew
From heaven distilled, creating all things new.
The rosy dawn leads in the golden day,
Fierce beasts and noxious reptiles slink away, 770
And the mild radiance of the loving word
Reclaims the wasted garden of the Lord.
Foul lusts and passions wild to darkness hie
While wakes the early gush of melody,
Myrtle and rose the thorn and briar replace, 775
The moral desert shows a smiling face,

A touch celestial melts man's heart of stone,
And raises woman to her rightful throne;
No more a slave, or for his lust a toy,
But partner in regenerating joy; 780
His crowned Queen Consort as in Christ a wife,
Charm of the home and angel of his life.
Yes! marriage first, best gift of God—the Mother
Of the dear names of Sister, Son, and Brother,
The sacred source and safeguard of all ties 785
That link mankind in sweet societies.
Did men but prize Christ's love at its high worth,
The days of heaven 'twould antedate on earth,
Fraud, wrong and violence were things abhorred,
War thunders hushed, sheathed the devouring sword,
And a vast holocaust of self arise, [790
In clouds of fragrance to millennial skies.
But though of innocence and peace bereft,
We are not to despair and darkness left;
The City of Foundations, that sweet star 795
Illumes the void and guides us from afar,
To tread the path our faithful fathers trod,
Whose shining footsteps track the way to God.
Take then the Key of Faith and firmly ope
The gates of darkness; spread the wings of hope,
And soar unshrinking to the golden zone [800

Of love, there fold thy wings before the throne,
There gazing with blest awe the truth absorb,
As the strong eagle drinks the burning orb.
And by that river fed thou shalt discern, 805
What here midst dubious clouds 'twas hard to learn;
Or, if thy flagging wing forbid a flight
So strenuous, grasp the safety lamp of light:
That shall suffice through life's dark paths to guide
Thy humble pilgrim feet whate'er betide, 810
Till thou arrive where perils past shall be
As odours that die not to memory,
But ever fresh remembrances shall tell
Of Him who loved and guided thee so well.
Yes! then and there thy glowing heart shall know 815
The wisdom and the goodness of each woe,
Of blighted hopes that faith and patience tried,
Of the dull ache when hope was gratified,
Of all that weaned thee from inferior loves,
And wooed for Him in whom thy being moves, 820
With whom alone are joys that do not die,
Love that ne'er fails, delights that satisfy.
So spite of its medicinal alloy,
Drink gratefully thy passing cup of joy,
Nor grieve that it doth pass; rather rejoice 825
That thus is taught the grandeur of the choice

Of souls heroical; thyself deny;
Live as befits an heir of royalty,
Despise inglorious ease, and treading down
With heavenshod feet the thorns, hold fast thy
crown, 830
Nor underrate the blessings kindly given,
To soothe thy path, by all-indulgent Heaven.

“No work of ease, thou sayest, no bed of roses,
Invites the heart that seriously proposes
Such task, and weaves the warp and woof of life, 835
Mingling stray joys with breadth of toil and strife,
While o’er the tangled web a truant sigh
Unbidden breathes and dares to question—why?”

Yes! undivorcedly knit and answered never,
That sigh and question have ascended ever 840
From yearning human hearts: Why did the great,
The good, the wise, the Loving One create,
Mysterious man? godlike and yet all prone
To evil? since infallibly ’twas known
That thus it would be? Vain it is to pry 845
Into the depths that all research defy.
Nay, if the dread intelligence were given,
If a new oracle could flash from Heaven,

The deep vast reason, the intent divine,
The purpose infinite which angels pine 850
To learn, what could the awful knowledge boot,
Without the power to smite the deadly root
Of the fell moral Upas? Who can stand
'Midst ruins huge in some once glorious land,
At Athens or Palmyra, and not sigh 855
O'er such memorials of fall'n majesty,
In sadness aggravated by the thought
How helpless man while thus such wreck is wrought.
Yet man presents a ruin sadder far
To eyes intelligent—a fallen star, 860
A temple desolate, a vacant shrine,
Where Love once dwelt in Presence all divine.
Behold him therefore so; 'tis vain to blink
The dark reality, and weakly shrink
From contemplating boldly truths that bring, 865
Bee-like, their honey guarded by a sting.
For no blind forces, no capricious fate,
Nor feeble goodness wrought this tangled state,
But His profound decree, to whom alone
The issues of Eternity are known, 870
Where Love and Wisdom work the vast design,
While Justice holds the plummet and the line,
And by that measure tried man's favoured race

Through free transgression lost its god-like place.
Yea! Ichabod, the glory is departed, 875
Our crown is in the dust, and broken-hearted
Creation, groaning, travails in strong pain,
'Till lost humanity be born again.
Gaze, then, upon this ruin, if thou wilt
Learn with fit awe the deathly force of guilt, 880
Nor dream that weak philosophy can deck
With amaranthine blooms the ghastly wreck.
The broken shaft, the fallen chapter,
Declare the grandeur of the things that were
But are not; and if ivy greenly wreathe 885
To veil decay, and wallflower sweetly breathe
O'er foul corruption, underneath still lies
The wreck that all their blandishments defies.
And though poetic art and sophist pride
Man's moral fall are impotent to hide, 890
And impotenter still to breathe again
New life into the forms divinely slain,
The ruins' echoes eloquently preach,
The fragmentary glories brightly teach
As doth a shivered mirror, though no more 895
Reflecting beauty perfect as before.
The shattered glass to re-unite, no art
Avails, but love can heal the broken heart,

And in the sheen of righteousness restored
Enshrine again the image of its Lord ; 900
Bright earnest of the Presence yet once more
To be our joy and glory, as before,
When the first happy parents of our race
In hallowed converse knew Him face to face,
As in the fragrance of the evening hour 905
He visited their unpolluted bower,
Where all was peace around and peace within
And fear unknown, because unknown all sin.
But peace with innocence bade earth farewell,
And the dark change let thorns and thistles tell, 910
And Sinai old, whose sounds and sights of awe
The dreadful trumpet-voice and fiery law
Forbade all access to the God of love,
No more announced by nightingale or dove.
Yet once He came to Horeb, not in thunder, 915
When earth quaked and the mountains reeled asunder,
And fire and blackness the skies overcast,
And the strong rocks were rent by the fierce blast ;
In these the prophet, weary of his lot,
Looked for him with desire and found him not. 920
But when the elemental rage was spent,
His still small voice, gently omnipotent,
The wearied martyr chided while he smiled,

As a fond father on a wayward child.
Then did Elijah learn of sin forgiven, 925
Of law appeased, and man's re-opened heaven,
Ere his own grand ascension to the throne,
Or Tabor's far off vision had made known
How the propitiation is the key
Alone unlocks the wondrous mystery ; 930
Now, blood-touched, opes the adamantine gate,
Where flaming cherub guards no longer wait,
Though nothing there can enter that defiles,
But loving angels welcome with kind smiles,
And lead the way where white-robed millions stand, 935
With palms victorious waved by every hand,
While echoing infinity along
Reverberates Redemption's rapturous song,
Swelling from star to star for evermore,
An ocean of deep tone without a shore. 940

As when the seed corn sinks in earth and dies,
Reviving fruits exuberantly rise,
So thoughts that seem to perish here supply
The germ of harvests hundredfold on high,
Where changeful Nature's reign shall pass away,* 945
And things of beauty bloom, without decay.
Not there the restless heart from flower to flower,

In the brief brightness of a summer hour,
Roves in keen quest of the soul's hidden good,
As the bee seeks her scattered honey food. 950
But at the fountain head of full delight,
Hope kisses joy, and faith embraces sight,
And the ineffable Presence fills with love
The ravished hosts that in their glory move,
Taught evermore how loving and how wise 955
The nurture here that trained them for the skies.
So storm and frost, dark winter's needful powers,
And genial spring's mild sunshine and soft showers,
With tender blade and blossom earth adorn
Ere laughs the purpling grape and waves the golden
corn. 960

Here cease we then our quest; nor wit, nor worth,
Nor the unstinted wealth of Heaven and earth,
Apart from God, man's boundless soul can bless,
Apart from Christ, relieve sin's sore distress.
But when returned to home the truant child 965
Weeps on the Father's bosom reconciled,
And in the Paradise of that embrace
Enjoys the earnest of eternal grace,
Then, with forgiven and forsaken sin,
The very days of Heaven on earth begin; 970

The soil, uncursed, with jewelled wealth is springing,
Angels around, with kindly helps are winging,
The morning stars redemption's song are singing,
Hills, vales, and seas with melody are ringing.
The mists of vanity curling away, 975
Melt in the rich hues of Love's roseate ray;
The new Creation, filled with golden light,
Unfolds on the regenerated sight
A glorious mirror, whose bright depths disclose
His beauteous form from whom all beauty flows, 980
On whom to look hath soul-transforming power,
As the sun gazed on tints the golden flower.
Pluck then the fruits along thy path that grow,
Drink of the streams that through this desert flow;
Enjoy thy youth, that priceless heritage, 985
Nor scorn the mellow joys of ripening age,
Whose seasonable comforts sweetly prove
The never sleeping Providence of Love
While we, scarce conscious, leave our years behind,
As summer blossoms scattered to the wind. 990
Yet these had power of beauty and of joy
To charm the child, to fascinate the boy,
And cheer care-hearted man, though swiftly gone,
Their functions all fulfilled, and life flows on
As flows the Rhine stream, threading fruitful bowers, 995

Vine-mantled hills, and coronetting towers,
Freighted with blessings as it rolls along,
Endeared to many a heart by love and song,
Till, widening as it nears the sombre coast,
Delights have ceased, and in dull swamps 'tis lost. 1000
Behold then thus our life as in a glass,
To dark oblivion hastening on to pass ;
Yet mark, the river blesses as it flows,
Nor stints its wealth, nor seeks inert repose
Lingering amidst the beauties of its course, 1005
But presses onward, steadfast from the source,
Enshrining grand events from age to age
Indelibly along its glassy page,
The deathless roll of glory or of shame,
Linked with some Cæsar's or Napoleon's name. 1010
So may our voyage glide in halcyon hours,
Through a bright fairyland of fruits and flowers,
But voices whisper, This is not your rest,
Nor self your end ; To BLESS IS TO BE BLEST.
Life's rich, mysterious stream can stagnate not, 1015
For progress is the charter of its lot,
O'er rocks, shoals, rapids, now abruptly going,
Anon thro' verdant pastures smoothly flowing ;
And if to-day grow black with storm and sorrow,
Calm shall return and sunshine gild to-morrow, 1020

When in her beauteous zone of painted tears
Hope smiles away despondencies and fears.
Then, since Vicissitude thus dogs our state,
And weaves the texture of our chequered fate,
Since circumstances, mocking our control, 1025
Perplex from the commencement to the goal,
'Tis Wisdom's teaching to live day by day
God to adore and His commands obey,
Who now shares with us, through a Saviour's blood,
THE GOD-LIKE PRIVILEGE OF DOING GOOD, 1030
The antidote to self, and balm for strife,
'Till death and judgment solve THE PARADOX OF LIFE.

L'ENVOY.

I.

It is a pleasant task to weave the song,
Like a new voyage in fresh hope begun,
That summer gales shall bear our barque along 1035
To bright blue skies and an unclouded sun.
Our course hath sped, and a safe port is won,
Where humble hearts can peacefully abide;
Life's vain perplexities serenely shun;
Escape the shoals of doubt and rocks of pride, 1040
And in the God of Hope with thankfulness confide.

II.

Nor doth He leave his trustful ones forlorn,
While their divine inheritance afar
Waits the birthday of the new golden morn.
That shall joy's everlasting gates unbar. 1045
For Faith, Hope, Love, swift-winged seraphs are,
Who, traversing the infinite Unknown
By that hid ladder, linking star with star,*
And earth with heav'n, in its inviolate zone,
Have ever access free to the tremendous throne. 1050

FINIS.



SONNETS.

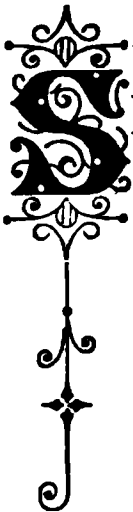
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A SHEAF OF SACRED SONNETS.


Introit.

ENT down from Heaven, the consecrating fire
To Israel's expectant altar came,
And rose th' undying sacrificial flame,
Grateful. Ah ! fain would my cold heart aspire,
Kindled by warmth divine, to wake the lyre,
Not to vain tales of human love and fame,
But to the praise of His thrice holy name,
Who doth the songs of Hebrew years inspire
With ever-living and life-giving power,
To stir the loftiest faculties of man,
And the deep counsel ope of Love Divine ;
Unfolding from Creation's pregnant hour
The growth of God's predestinated plan,
Till the new Heaven and earth fulfil His grand design.

Lev. vi. 12, 13. Lev. ix. 24. 1 Cor. ii. 10. Rev. xxi. 1. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

SONNET 1.

First Fruits.


UT forth the sickle to the fields of thought,
And gather in their teeming wealth ; but chief
Select with grateful heart a first-fruits sheaf,
And wave it to His Name whose power hath
wrought

The harvest miracle, and sweetly taught,
By Spring and Summer, blossom, fruit, and leaf,
That Winter is not death, nor cloudy grief
Despair, but oft is with hid blessings fraught,
In season due to come, through His great love,
Who worketh joy from sorrow, life from death ;
And as the barley sheaf was sanctified
By a slain lamb, ere wav'd the fields above,
May my mean gift blood-sprinkled be through faith
In the true Lamb who to redeem us died.

Leviticus xxiii. 10, 11, 12. Jeremiah ii. 3. Rev. i. 5.

SONNET II.

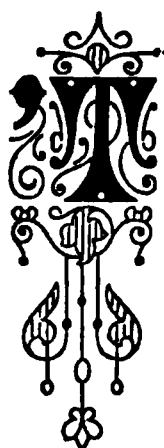
Nature.

ATURE! sweet shadow of His sacred Name,
Whose living power and teeming blessedness
Mould the bright form and weave the beauteous
dress

Of the fair Cosmos,—gently would we blame
Thy over-fond adorers, while we claim
The heart for Him alone ; Him only bless,
Who from the fount of His own loveliness
Sprinkles such beauty o'er this wondrous frame,
That He is ever present with delight
And blessings multitudinous as the dew
Of morning gladdened by the glorious sun.
In thee as in a glass beams forth the light
Of His adorable face for ever new,
And infinitely various, though but One.

SONNET III.

Atheism.

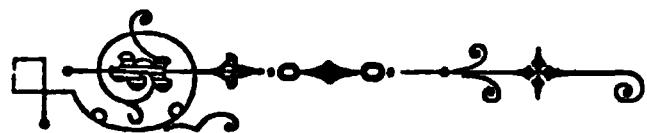
 WAS only in his heart the fool of old
 Whispered the lie—Tush, tush, there is no God.
 But loudly now he trumpeteth abroad,
 With scientific brass, denial bold.
 Heaven's hosts no longer sweetly sing—"Behold
 Our good Creator;" but shriek "*Ichabod.*"
 The Titan atom down to dust hath trod
 The throne of the Eternal. Faith's pure gold
 Hath vanished in the critic crucible,
 With no residuum but ashy dross.
 "Eat, drink, and die," O Godlike Wisdom's plan!
 Away with hope and fear, with Heav'n and hell,
 Eternal life, the Saviour and his cross,
 Thou'rt scarce an upper kind of brute, O man!

Ps. xiv. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 32.



SONNET IV.

The Name of Jehovah.



THOU shalt not take God's Holy Name in vain!
Stands the command. Who, then, may guiltless
take
Into polluted lips that Name, nor quake
Awestruck? Yet were it treason to refrain,
And to this generation not maintain
Thy glorious Name and fearful. Lo! they shake
Thy yoke from their disdainful necks, and make
Blind atoms the Creator! Fools and insane.
But all creation chaunts Thee Lord alone;
Thy sleepless seraphs, the eternal stars,
Swell the grand chorus with their million voices;
Earth's Heav'n-born echoes float back round Thy throne,
Glad ocean, thundering praise, bows at Thy bars,
And Thy Church loves Thee, worships and rejoices.

Exodus xx. 7. Ps. cxlviii. Deut. xxviii. 58.

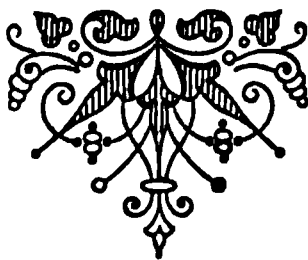


SONNET V.

Jehovah Jireh.


FORGE of uneasy thoughts and crowding cares,
Vain heart, look on that Name and calm abide,
Trustful. Can good be to His child denied,
Whose guardian care each feathered warbler shares
That feeds and sings, untortured by affairs,
Nature's glad song, "Jehovah doth provide."
But on that sacred mount where Jesus died,
The evangelic voice for thee declares
Richer provision, by Love more divine,
Than thrills great Nature's heart, and stirs her
song.
Grace wakes new melody with sweeter chords,
Exalting blood Redemption's vast design,
And now all things in earth and heaven belong
By oath divine to all who are the Lord's.

Gen. xxii. 14. Matt. vi. 28, 30. Rom. viii. 32. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 23.
Heb. vi. 13, 20.



SONNET VI.

Jehovah Rophi.

IPPOCRATES and Galen! names renowned
For science that concerns the body's weal,
No art had ye the sin-sick soul to heal,
Or bind a broken heart. Skill more profound,
And a Diviner Name, must cure that wound
With richer balm than Gilead's. He can steal
The deadly sting from memory, and reveal
Peace to the anguished conscience, shedding around
The heart's dark chambers light from Love's
own Heaven.


But ah! JEHOVAH ROPHI! precious Name!
Thou true *Ardiphne** of this wilderness,
Shall I not weep that unto Thee 'twas given
To drink my tears, poisoned with sin and shame,
So that my health was Thy soul's bitterness?

Exodus xv. 25. Psalm cxlvii. 3. Isaiah lxi. 1. Psalm ciii. 3.

* **ARDIPHNE.** The tree that healed the waters. Type of the tree of life, the cross.

SONNET VII.

Jehovah Nissi.



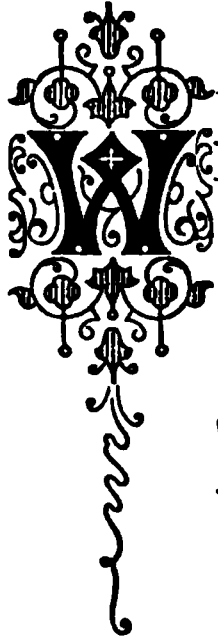
WHILE armies o'er the blood-soaked battle plain
Lions and eagles for their banners wave,
Emblems of rage, voracious as the grave,
Glutting herself with multitudes of slain,
Faith's glorious hosts a nobler war sustain,
And the dark powers of evil boldly brave
Under His bannered Name who wars to save,
Not to destroy mankind, nor wars in vain.
Saviour! JEHOVAH NISSI! lead us on,
Thy truth, our star and pledge of victory;
Thy cross, the patient lamb and gentle dove,
Our ensigns in the fight; and when 'tis won,
Glory and praise shall be alone to Thee,
And the blest banner over us, THY LOVE.

Exodus xvii. 15. Ps. lx. 4. Sol. Song ii. 4.



SONNET VIII.

Jehovah, Shalom.



HERE cowslips freshly breathe in dewy May,
And smiles an innocent, sweet sleeping child,
As if on angels in bright dreams it smiled;
Or swells the nightingale's rich liquid lay,
While softly shines the star that folds the day,
And Nature owns the hush of influence
mild;

The soul by transient phantasy beguiled,
Dreams there is peace; but as a dream, away
Floats the illusion, with a yearning sigh,
That echoes through the void heart's secret cells
Which Nature cannot fill; Her Lord alone,
JEHOVAH SHALOM, doth that boon supply.

And when He in the bosom's temple dwells,
Those cherubs, Peace and Joy, smile o'er His
throne.

Judges vi. 24. John xiv. 27. Phil. iv. 7.



SONNET IX.

Jehovah Tsidkenu.

DOWN flowing to the ankles from the neck,
 The sacred snow-white vestment pure and fair,
 Fulfilled the law—"Garment thou shalt not
 wear

Of divers texture; nor shall aught bedeck
 Thy priests but linen, for the moth makes wreck,
 Of mingled wool!" Doth then Jehovah care
 For raiment? Nay! but nought may dream to
 share

The glory of His grace; and without speck
 Or perishable warp thy bridal dress,
 My soul, must be pure livery of Heaven,
 To beautify thee midst that happy host,
 In blood-washed robes of unmixed righteousness,
 Who sing, for ever ransomed and forgiven,
 JEHOVAH TSIDKENU, their joy and boast.

Deut. xxii. 11. Ezek. xliv. 17. Rom. iii. 22; xi. 6. Jer. xxiii. 6.
 Rev. xix. 8. Rev. vii. 10, 12.



SONNET X.


Jehovah Shammah.

—❖—❖—❖—
E Lord is there! O happiest, holiest spot,
What central orb, what Heaven of Heaven's
unknown,
Or wondrous star beyond the blazing zone
Of space hath such transcendent honour got?
Or what inhabitants their blessed lot
Before the glowing emerald-circled throne
And dazzling glory of the LIVING ONE
Revealed? And yet where is Jehovah not?
Though throned on high, while underneath His feet
Crouch Himalay and Andes, He deigns dwell
In the low temple of a grateful heart,
Bringing down Heaven to earth. Ah! Presence,
sweet
With melody of joy unspeakable,
No more, oh never more from mine depart!

Ezek. xlviii. 35. Isaiah lxvi. 1, 2. John xiv. 17, 23. 1 Cor. iii. 16;
vi. 19. Zephaniah iii. 17.

SONNET XI.

The Bible.—No. 1.




BOOK many-tomed, yet one, by what hid power
Dost thou the nations of the world enchain?
The eloquence and songs of Greece in vain
Contest with thee the palm; as fades a flower,
They pass away, or please a passing hour,
But thou dost touch the heart and stir the brain
Of ever-springing millions, and dost gain
Access to learned hall and Royal tower
And pauper cot, entering with high command,
Yet loved and honoured as a welcome 'guest,
Whether in hours of gladness or of gloom,
Drying the mourner's tear with angel hand,
The blessed marriage feast rend'ring more blest,
And chasing darkness from the opening tomb.



SONNET XII.

The Bible.—No. 2. •






WHENCE then this living force, from age to age
Expanding? On thy ever youthful face
Rolling millenniums leave no wrinkled trace,
No grey hairs taint thy strength. The glorious
page,
With adamantine lustre, foils the rage
Of every gnawing viper; yet a race,
Scattered and peeled, whom suffering and disgrace,
Scoff and contempt, along the historic stage
Have made a byword, gave thee to mankind
A Comforter, a Teacher, and a Law.
Virtue's firm staff and Folly's scourging rod,
A paradox and riddle to the blind,
How plain the lesson thus revealed with awe,
Thou art the very oracle of God.



SONNET XIII.

Mount Sinai.

 SINAI, stern emblem of relentless law,
 Not uttered by grey legislative sages,
But flashed in thunders o'er thy rocky pages,
 While Moses quaked with unaccustomed awe,
So dread the sounds he heard, the sights he saw.
Still round thy name that blackening tempest rages,
That trumpet-voice down the long roll of ages,
Through earthquake and eclipse echoes "Withdraw;
Touch not this mount, or die." O scene sublime!
And thou, hoar witness of that grand decree,
The fiat of Jehovah's righteous will,
Thy rugged beacon through the mists of time
Warns us from law, and death, and fear to flee
To grace and peace at Zion's holy hill.

Exodus xix. 16, 18; xx. 18. Gal. iv. 24, 25. Heb. xii. 18, 24.

Rom. iii. 20.



SONNET XIV.

Mount Horeb.


MOUNTAIN of God! hoar ages round thee shed
 A sacred halo since those ancient days,
 When to thy foot, on pastures green to graze
 His quiet sheep, the shepherd Moses led,
 Unconscious that 'twas holy ground to tread,
 'Till the bright bush on which he turned to gaze,
 Burned unconsumed by the Shekina's blaze,
 And the command came from the Presence Dread,
 His soul perplexing with surprise and wonder,
 To guide thence forward Israel as his flock.
 Here too the humbled Tishbite came to prove,
 That not by earthquake, hurricane and thunder,
 Is God revealed, but by the gushing Rock
 Of blessing, and the still small voice of Love.

Exodus iii. 1, 6. Ps. lxxviii. 20. 1 Kings xix. 8, 13.



SONNET XV.

Mount Carmel.

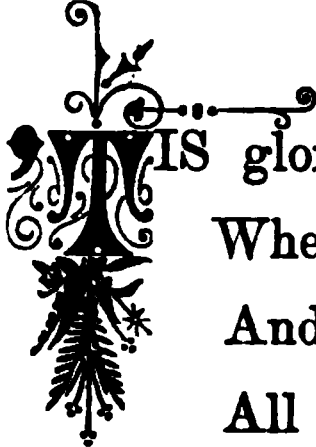

 VINE-TUFTED Carmel ! thee the amorous spring
 Delights to beautify. The wanton hours
 Sport through thy mazy wilderness of flowers,
 Where lovingly to every Zephyr's wing
 Thick fragrance hyacinth and jonquil fling,
 And Sharon's rose adorns thy balmy bowers.
 But lo ! thy peace invade fierce rival powers.
 The awful Tishbite beards the wicked king,
 And mocks his Priests ! they on their altar sod
 Leap, bleed, and shriek, " O Baal, help ! "—in vain ;
 But by Elijah's prayer the skies are riven,
 God's fire descends. " JEHOVAH IS THE GOD "—
 They shout ; and the vile priests at Kishon slain
 Atone the law of Moses and of Heaven.

Isaiah xxxv. 2. Sol. Song vii. 5. 1 Kings xviii. 19, 40.



SONNET XVI.

Mount Nebo.




THIS glorious on a mountain-top to stand
When morn folds back the starry veil of night,
And forth her chamber smiles the queenly light—
All gold and roses by fresh zephyrs fanned,
While showering pearls on earth with royal hand.
But holier visions filled the eagle sight
Of Moses, when from Pisgah's destined height
He viewed with undimmed eyes the mystic land,
Rich, in the hues of the eternal morn ;
And to his prescient ken arose afar
Tabor's bright cloud of witness, that shall shine
For man through ages past, and yet unborn,
Till, with the splendour of the morning star,
All earth and heaven behold that majesty divine.

Deut. xxxiv. 1 ; iii. 24, 27. Matt. xvii. 3. 2 Peter i. 16, 19.



SONNET XVII.

Mount Olivet.

AIR Mount of Olives, to fond fancy's eye,
Thy picture rises like a pleasant dream,
As when by some soft flowing summer stream
Sleep lulls the soul with fairy melody,

And all is beautiful in earth and sky.

But thee more solemn lights and shades beseem,
With holiest memories thy vineyards teem,
Of forms beloved and thoughts that do not die,
Those treasures rare that Truth to Time bequeaths.

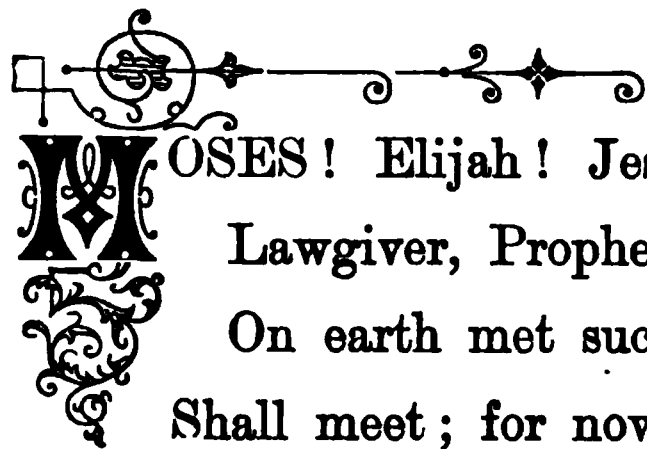
Here David wept, barefoot and broken-hearted!
Here Jesus walked so oft in converse sweet,
The very atmosphere His presence breathes.

Here was His agony! and when He parted
From earth, 'twas thou last kissed his glorious feet.

2 Sam. xv. 30. Luke xxi. 37. Matt. xxiv. 3; xxi. 1; xxvi. 30.
Luke xix. 29, 37. Mark xiii. 3. John viii. 1. Luke xxiv. 50, 52.
Acts i. 9, 12.

SONNET XVIII.

Mount Tabor.




MOSES! Elijah! Jesus! Wondrous three,
 Lawgiver, Prophet, Priest. Never before
 On earth met such grand group, nor ever more
 Shall meet; for now through long eternity,
 Law, Prophecy, and Grace unite in Thee—
 Saviour! whom the rapt hosts of heaven adore,
 Robed in that light which once on earth Thou wore,
 Too bright for mortal eyes unscathed to see,
 When on this hill of Thy transfiguration
 Shone forth Thy Godhead in that marvellous hour,
 Clothing Thy form with such candescence hoary,
 As gives to us the blest anticipation,
 That we beholding Thee shall by Thy power
 Be changed into the likeness of Thy glory.

Matt. xvii. 2, 3. Heb. i. 3. John xvii. 22, 24. 2 Pet. i. 18.
 2 Cor. iii. 18. Phil. iii. 21. 1 John iii. 2. Ps. xvii. 15.



SONNET XIX.


Gethsemane.

 **G**ETHSEMANE! through the believer's heart
Thy name awakes a sympathetic thrill,
With His whose throbbings poured an icy chill
O'er universal life, when here apart
His more than mortal agony bade start
The bloodsweat, pledge of a stream fuller still,
Soon from those veins to gush and lave the ill
Of sin away. Who coldly can depart
From thee, Gethsemane, nor long to kiss
Aside, as bending angel erst, some pain,
If but a single drop of that blood rain
Wrung from Emanuel's bursting brow in this
Satan's dark hour? nor altogether vain,
Such wish; 'tis owned and paid in deep communion's
bliss.



SONNET XX.

Golgotha.




PLACE of a skull! the path Emanuel trod!
Tow'rd thee, cross-laden, we must look to tread
Who hope to follow the beloved Head.
But light, indeed, our light afflictions' load,
To thine, sin-bearing, patient Lamb of God,
Whom, faint and tottering, those fell butchers led,
While from the recent scourge thy lifetide bled,
Ebbing, as thou went o'er the stained sod,
Wonder of earth below and Heaven above,
To pour from Calvary that mystic shower,
The crowning effort of Almighty power,
The crowning glory of eternal love.
Ah! happy Cyrenæan, in such hour,
The cross from those vexed limbs permitted to remove.



SONNET XXI.

Calvary.

HE deed is done! the most mysterious deed
Hate ever dared or patient Heaven allowed.
Around the cross the hosts of darkness crowd,
Exulting, to behold Emanuel bleed,
And the crushed hope of the long-promised seed.
But ev'n while that dear Head to death is bowed,
While Nature, agonised, proclaims aloud,
In earthquake and eclipse, sin's awful meed,
That shout, "'Tis FINISHED," tells, that Jesus dead
Hath vanquished death; and to the hosts of air
Reveals Love's victory and Hate's despair.
Beneath that wounded heel's triumphant tread,
The rent veil doth Heaven's opened way declare,
And conquered Hades yields for ever, captive led.



SONNET XXII.



Pentecost.

BLEST Pentecostal Dove, Thy wings expand,
 And through the deep gloom of our sin-born
 night
 Illapsing, waft the word-created light,
 As erst old Chaos felt the high command ;
 From the dark depths call forth the baptised land,
 Life's future lighted temple. Lo ! bedight
 In holy garments of blood-washen white,
 The Church, a mystically sprinkled band,
 Awaits thy sealing impress from above ;
 Whether a cherub on the rushing blast
 Thou tread'st the heavens with blackness undercast,
 Wrapping the sevenfold fire of life and love,
 Or tokening the wrathful deluge past,
 The olive leaf of grace Thou bring'st, anointing Dove.



SONNET XXIII.

Zion.

 **G**HIEF joy of Earth, and favoured of the skies,
Thy golden tresses now in dust are laid,
 Beautiful Zion; yet thou are not dead,
But deathlike sleeping; while with sleepless eyes
Angels watch longingly to see thee rise,
Immortal lily, from thy wintry bed
And shake the dust from thy celestial head,
The cynosure of all the prophecies.
Would that thine hour had come! thy years of sadness
Ended at last, for nature waxeth old
With breaking heart, and time is weak and hoary.
Oh bring back Zion, Lord, with songs of gladness!
Away creation's worn out vesture fold,
And come, O quickly come, in thy own changeless
glory.



MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

FOUR SONNETS FOR THE SEASON

OF THE

RUSSO-TURKISH WAR.

WITH TWO TO QUEEN VICTORIA.


These six Sonnets were printed at the season indicated, for private circulation, under a "nom de plume."

"THEY err who count it glorious to subdue
By conquest far and wide, to overrun
Large countries, and in fields great battles win,
Great cities by assault. What do these worthies
But rob and spoil, burn, slaughter and enslave
Peaceable nations, neighbouring or remote
Made captive, yet deserving freedom more
Than those their conquerors, who leave behind
Nothing but ruin wheresoe'er they rove,
And all the flourishing works of Peace destroy,
Then swell with pride, and must be titled gods,
Great benefactors of mankind, deliverers."

MILTON.

To Queen Victoria,

ON READING THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE LIFE OF THE
PRINCE CONSORT.

HAT thou wert every inch a British Queen
August and mild, magnanimous and true,
Thy loyal loving people gladly knew ;
But, as a lofty drama's acts between,
The rising curtain opes some grander scene,
This spirit-stirring volume, moves anew
And heightens our devotion, while we view
Here in broad light thy courage that hath been,—
Tempered with wisdom and inspired by faith—
The steady influence, the hidden star,
Sustaining England's honour and renown.
Yes ! thy heart* shrines that honour, and the breath
Of sweet undying love, still from afar
Confirms thy soul, and guards the lustre of thy Crown.

* A French journal has lately said that the magnificent traditions of Britain survive only in the heart of a woman, and the brain of an aged statesman. Heaven forefend that they should have died in the nation's heart !

To Queen Victoria on her Birthday.


VICTORIA, Queen of Kings, yea, loftier still,
Queen of thy People's hearts, we hail the day
That smiled on Britain with auspicious ray,
When, thy illustrious mission to fulfil
Thou wert bestowed upon us by the will
Of the most High, whom we in thee obey,
And with thanksgiving supplicate and pray
For show'rs of bliss on that dear Head, until
Graced with the Crown of Life in realms above*
Where Albert waits thee never more to part !
But sweeter names than Queen to thee belong,
"Wife," "Mother," "Widow," wake our tenderest love,
And thy home pictures touch the English heart,
While swells "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN," in loyal song.

* "Tanto piu. . . . Quanto piu vale
Sempiterna bellezza che mortale."

PETRARCA.




Russo-Turkish War, 1877.*


SWORD of Justice, bathed in Heaven, descend
 Swift flashing as of yore, and keenly bite
 The helm'd aggressor! Let not lawless might
 Prevail against the brave, who well defend
 Home, faith, and liberty, without a friend,
 Though Righteous men on earth approve their right
 And angels from the Empyrean height
 O'er the stupendous strife expectant bend
 Wond'ring if haply may the Word come forth
 The Muscovite Sennacherib to smite,
 And save the nations; or if now, once more
 These Crowned Conspirators, Archpests of Earth,
 Shall gloat, while Freedom sighs and wings her flight
 From prostrate Europe to some Trans-Pacific shore.


* Bishop Burnet, on Article xxxvii. of the Church of England, says :
 “. . . Unjust wars designed for making conquests, for the enlarge-
 ment of empire and the raising of the glory of princes, are certainly
 public robberies, and the highest acts of injustice and violence possible ;
 in which men sacrifice to their pride or humour the peace of the world,
 and the lives of all those that die in the quarrel, whose blood God will
 require at their hands. Such princes become accountable to God, in
 the highest degree imaginable, for all the rapine and bloodshed that is
 occasioned by their pride and injustice. . . . There is no cause of war
 more unjust than the propagating the true religion, or the destroying a
 false one. That is to be left to the Providence of God, who can change
 the hearts of men, and bring them to the knowledge of the truth, when
 He will. Ambition, and the desire of Empire, must never pretend to
 carry on God's work. And it were better barefacedly to own that men
 are set on by carnal motives than to profane religion and the name of
 God by making the pretence.”

Russo-Turkish War, 1877.

UST England only sigh, or blush with shame
When Right and Truth are strangled, and
the strong
Defile the Earth with blood? Alas! how long!
Time was when Kosciusko's glorious fame
And injured Poland's trumpet-sounding name,
Stirred free hearts here to sympathy and song
Against the despot doers of foul wrong.
But now the Muscovite with sword and flame
Lays waste another Poland, trampling laws
And twice sworn treaties scornful in the mire;
In Christ's insulted Name makes savage war,
And cheered by dastard bigotry's applause
Of Europe's freedom rears the funeral pyre,
Intent to hurl from heaven England's Imperial Star.



*Scutari, Constantinople, 1877.**

ER the Propontis glides our snowy sail,
Swelled gently by the favouring Southern breeze,
Till midst a crowd of thronging memories,
Like the enchantments of Arabian tale,
Byzantium's rising minarets we hail,
Where the swift-rushing Bosphorus links the seas
And the crown'd Queen of Cities holds the keys
Of a world's Empire in that lovely vale.
But ah! what tender thoughts, what solemn sight
Attract us to the Asiatic shore!
There on Scutari's consecrated steep
Those British Heroes rest, who died for RIGHT
And Europe's freedom. We dare not deplore
The glorious dead, but Europe's guilt and shame we weep.

* On the monument designed by Baron Marochetti, and erected upon the memorable burying ground at Scutari, these words from the pen of Lord Macaulay yet record (but how long?) a noble sentiment and an irrefragable truth :

TO THE MEMORY
OF THE BRITISH SOLDIERS AND SAILORS,
WHO
DURING THE YEARS 1854 AND 1855
DIED FAR FROM THEIR COUNTRY
IN DEFENCE OF THE LIBERTIES OF EUROPE,
THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED
BY THE GRATITUDE
OF QUEEN VICTORIA AND HER PEOPLE,
1857.

To Lord Blantyre.

BLANTYRE, when History's truth-telling page
Shall damn with verdict just the guilty Czar,
And brand with double shame an impious war
That, cloaked with zeal and masqued, betrays a
rage

The scandal of our philanthropic age,

Thy deed* o'er those red slaughter fields afar
Shall shine, my Blantyre, as a tremulous star
Lightens the path for Mercy's feet t' assuage
The woes it loathes to mark. O contrast bright

With glory to the good! Ye Earth and Heaven,
And Thou of both THE LORD, avenge these wrongs
Of Trust and Truth; the fell aggressor smite;

Back to his lair let War's gaunt wolf be driven,
In Thy just wrath to whom vengeance belongs.

* During the Russo-Turkish War in 1877, Lord Blantyre was not only an active helper of the Stafford House Committee, who furnished relief to the suffering Turkish soldiers, but also, at his own private expense, sent several Surgeons and medical helps to the Turkish hospitals at the seat of war in Armenia, as well as in Europe.

To Baron Marochetti Modelling a Bust.

These lines owe their production to an interesting conversation, or series of conversations, during some days while the Sculptor was modelling a bust of the writer. Marochetti had said, "Your face is like a woman's—its play of features is so constantly shifting that I find it hard to catch the expression." I tried to argue that, therefore, there was a something called *mind*, irrespective of organised matter. We had much very interesting discussion on the subject, but with what result I cannot say. The Sculptor seemed to entertain a materialistic view, though he very amiably discussed the point. My own idea being that what is called beautiful or sublime in the material world has no existence as such in itself, but is designed to excite in man the emotions suitable to his nature, we so have an argument for Teleology as strong, or stronger even, than any supplied by only useful contrivance. The beasts see the rainbow, sunrise, sunset, lovely blossoms, stars, and moon, but see not beauty or sublimity. Mind clothes nature with these. Marochetti argued that the expression of the countenance was due to the material lines. "No doubt," I said, "but you admit the rapid play of my thought troubles you to catch a fixed expression, so what you do catch at last is my inward self." Thus we pleasantly occupied the sittings.

I.

BARON, while thus beneath thy plastic hand
 This clay takes form, life-like in all but breath,
 Pensive I dream thy marbled work shall stand
 For ages, when Forgetfulness and Death,
 This now warm living type of thy cold bust,
 With all his memories dear, have trod to dust.

II.

Yet art thou no creator ; wherefore then
Must God's high handiwork be marred, while thine
Down generations of successive men
Can cause the glory of thy name to shine ?
Shall Art disparage Nature, or cold stone
Achieve what 'fits essential life alone ?

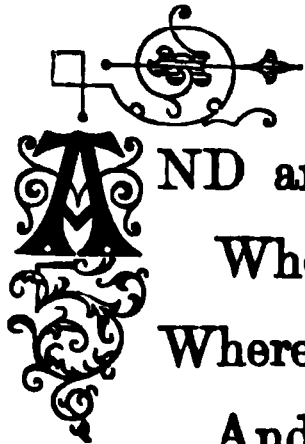
III.

Nay, could'st thou breathe into the silent clay
The very breath of life, it thence must die,
And so with life would come thy work's decay,
Which now seems born heir of Eternity !
O paradox immense ! the living dies,
And lifeless matter wins th' immortal prize.

IV.

Ah ! Marochetti ! there's a riddle here,
But faith can solve it. Humbly let us bow,
Sin-doomed, yet blest in Hope till Christ appear,
Revealing what God's children know not now,
But shall, when clothed in beauty like His own,
They gaze and love and bow before His throne.

A Birthplace Visited.



AND art thou then the humble spot
Where this frail being found a name,
Where soul and matter sprang from nought,
And I what I am now became?

II.

Can I without emotion see
The roof that owns my twofold birth,
Where one eventful dawn in me
Joined mind to body, life to earth?

III.

Ah! how unconscious was I then
Of all these sorrows, doubts, and fears,
Attendants on the sons of men,
In passing life's dark vale of tears.

IV.

Many a year hath rolled away,
Many a distant scene I've known,
And many a joy hath felt decay
In feelings frozen and passions flown.

V.

And the dew-like freshness of the heart,
That nurtured Hope's young smiling flowers,
Hath in my bosom now no part,
So deadening are the world's cold powers.

VI.

But thou art still unconscious there
As in that hour of all to me ;
Thy trees, thy flowers still bloom as fair
Curst by no gift of memory.

* * * * *

REVISITED AFTER MANY YEARS.

VII.

Too fondly would we penetrate
The clouds our coming years that veil ;
But friendly darkness shrouds our fate,
Or mortal flesh and blood must quail.

VIII.

As wandering on a foreign shore,
Vague thoughts the wearied heart had cheered,
The humble home to see once more
To childhood and to youth endeared.

IX.

Boon Fancy, that enchantress fond,
Mistress of every form and hue,
With gentle stroke of fairy wand
Long lost emotions waked anew.

X.

As by a glass of magic power,
Brought nigh while oceans rolled between,
Each heart-imprinted tree and flower
Bloomed fresh as they had ever been.

XI.

Those ancient hawthorns creaming white,
The purpling lilacs ever dear,
The golden tressed laburnums bright,
Like angels from some glorious sphere ;

XII.

The rustic wattled arbour seat,
Beneath whose leafy canopy,
With rose and honeysuckle sweet,
Bright hours like dreams oft floated by.

XIII.

From haytide in the little park
Rich fragrance floated o'er the sea ;
And, soaring still, the very lark
Sang as of yore its song to me.

XIV.

As Venice through the waves upborne,
A new creation seems to rise,
Obedient to the touch of morn
Arose these teeming phantasies.

XV.

Illusion sweet ! Yet oft a dream
Hath immortality in thought,
While things that all substantial seem
Like spectres vanish into nought.

* * * * *

XVI.

Purpose fulfilled, or wanderings o'er,
The currents shift of rolling years,
And to his native haunts once more
The barque of life each pilgrim steers.

XVII.

With heart of hope thus drawn again,
To longed for scenes of early days
Fondly I haste; but ah! how vain
The thought on past delights to gaze.

XVIII.

What wizard vile of Eastern tales,
Or upas fell, hath blasted here
These scenes beneath its poison gales,
To nature and to me so dear?

XIX.

As blackening locust swarms devour
All verdant life, like hosts from hell,
Here hedge, nor tree, nor grass, nor flower,
Of ruined beauty lives to tell.

XX.

The precious woodbine-mantled cot
Swept down dark fate's relentless stream,
With every charm, that blessed the spot
Hath fled like a dissolving dream.

XXI.

Gone are those hawthorns quaint and old,
The ground they beautified unknown ;
The bright laburnum's living gold,
Field, garden, harbour, all are gone.

XXII.

No more shall sound of whetted scythe
Salute the dawn of summer day,
Nor happy youths and maidens blythe
Save mirthfully the fragrant hay.

XXIII.

No primrose sweet, no verdant sod,
Shall dewy Spring e'er wake again,
Where false civilization's God
Is shrin'd with all his hideous train.

XXIV.

Rectangles of unsightly brick,
Tall chimneys belching filthy smoke,
The air with soot and ashes thick,
Pale children dwarfed by mammon's yoke.

XXV.

A squalid population stowed
In dismal squares and murky lanes,
The sordid demon's grim abode,
Who forges now a nation's chains.

XXVI.

On the strange wreck I gaze forlorn,
A grave-yard of the living dead,
And bless my star that I was born
Ere thence the life of life had fled.

XXVII.

Then from the vile mart turn away,
Where happiness is sold for dross.
But who in mammon's scales can weigh
Humanity's eternal loss.

XXVIII.

The air by poisons undefiled—
The incense breath of rural spring,
The glad laugh of a ruddy child,
Where cowslips shine and thrushes sing.

XXIX.

The healthful odour of the soil
From furrows turned with comely art,
As sings the patient son of toil
With stalwart nerve and trustful heart.

XXX.

The snowy flocks the landscape's charm—
The lowing herds that homeward bring
The milky riches of the farm—
The farmer happier than a king.

XXXI.

His quiet home like sacred ground
Is hedged from the remorseless din,
While sylvan beauty smiles around,
And faith, love, reverence within.

XXXII.

Such blessings from the Father's hand
As nature's holy things should be,
But sorrow waits the heart or land
That loses natural piety.

* * * * *

XXXIII.

Home of the brave, the good, the wise,
Dear England, blest of God so long,
To thee the parable applies—
Do not thyself a deadly wrong.

XXXIV.

Gold is not wealth, and fickle trade
Her wings may spread for other lands,
The million-peopled town may fade
Till ruin dwells where now it stands.

XXXV.

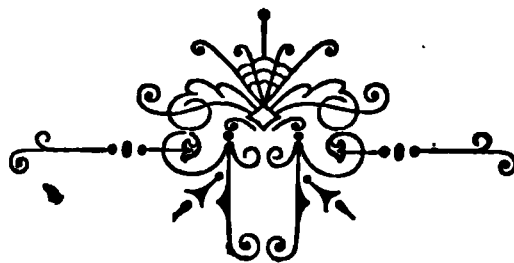
Avaunt the omen! but no foe,
No stroke of unrelenting hate
Can lay thy native beauty low,
Or thy true wealth annihilate.

XXXVI.


Forget not then the generous soil,
Thy children's priceless heritage,
Whose sure response to faithful toil
Hath never failed from age to age.

XXXVII.

These glorious hills and fruitful vales
Nurtured Britannia's matchless race,
And ere vast commerce swelled thy sails
God made thee freedom's dwelling place.



To Benjamin D'Israeli accepting a Peerage.

ORD BEACONSFIELD, thy patient arduous toil
The eminence it merits hath attained,
And from that sphere serene thy star hath
gained

It shines down calmly on the low turmoil,
Where Envy's restless billows heave and boil.

While, to face upward evermore constrained,
Thy lustre they reflect, nor dimmed, nor stained,
But heightened as the jewel by its foil.

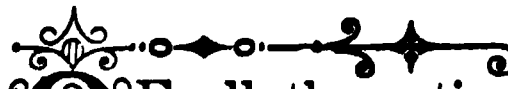
'Tis well! thou hast an honourable fame,

And thy Queen's warm regard is justly thine,
Nor less in England's pictured page is set
As a true Patriot thy jewelled name.

Earth can no more: only the hand divine
Gives glory's amaranthine coronet.



At Hughenden. (May, 1881.)

 OF all the actions of thy bright career,
Departed shade, I contemplate the last
With a calm pleasure, while beholding here
Thy sober estimate of grandeurs past.

II.

The tinsel pomps and pageantries of power,
The acclamations of a fickle crowd,
Well did'st thou judge, suit not the solemn hour
That waits alike the lowly and the proud.

III.

No Westminster could glorify the gloom,
No public honours gild the spectre death,
But in thy lone unostentatious tomb
I see the victory of Love and Faith.

IV.

Beside the honoured partner of thy life,
Thy chosen rest shall evermore proclaim
The truth that God's sweet gift, a faithful wife,
Surpasses far the vanities of fame.

V.

But while thy choice of quiet burial here
True wisdom and humility attest,
A nation's heart was present at thy bier—
Thou could'st not pass obscurely to thy rest.

VI.

Princes and peers their heartfelt homage gave
As mourners bore thee to the sacred earth,
A grateful Queen strewed garlands on thy grave,
And millions kissed the hand that marked thy
worth.

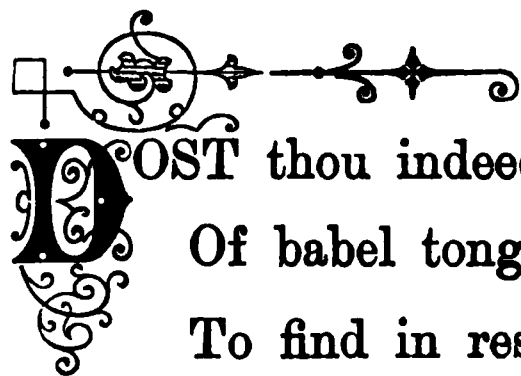
VII.

A pensive pilgrim I approach the spot,
But shed no tear for thee, thy work is o'er,
Thou retest where the wicked trouble not,
And slander's demon tongue can pierce no more



“The Nineteenth Century” Sonnet.

[When the able periodical thus named was started it was prefaced by a brilliant sonnet from the pen of the Poet Laureate, which appeared to me in its gist and sentiment to harmonise perilously with that sceptical and unsettling spirit which is the evil characteristic of the age. Assuming it as a fact that we do not possess TRUTH upon the subjects of deepest importance to man, doubt goes upon a voyage of discovery over the ocean of the unknown, and generally makes shipwreck. But Christians do possess by faith and experience absolute certainty, and should not shrink from asserting their superiority. In this conviction the present sonnet was written.]

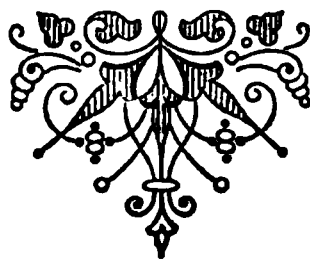


DOST thou indeed embark with such a crew
Of babel tongues upon a dreary quest,
To find in restlessness the precious rest
And “golden harbour,” that when men eschew
Rashly the coast of Faith must fade from view,
Forever sunk beneath the ocean crest
While they roam starless, chartless, and unblest.
Were it my lot to seek adventures new,
Of hope or hazard on a surging sea,
None but true British tars my bark should steer.

One language their's, one flag, one homebred faith,
So now with Pilot good from Galilee,
And Saints true mates the Golden Port we near,
While our flag rules the gulphs of Doubt and Death.

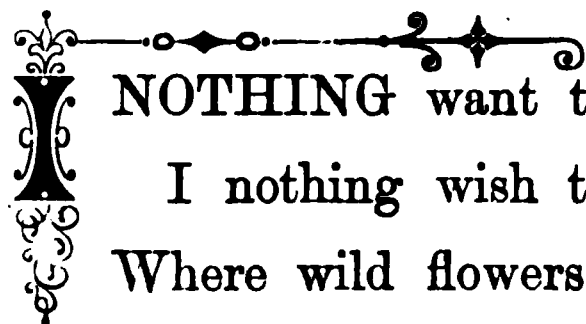
THE POET LAUREATE'S SONNET.

Those that of late had fled far and fast
To touch all shores, now leaving to the skill
Of others their old craft, seaworthy still,
Have charter'd this ; where, mindful of the past,
Our true co-mates regather round the mast
Of diverse tongue, but with a common will
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and brave the blast ;
For some, descending from the sacred peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world about ;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbour be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt.



Contentment.

I.


 NOTHING want that courts can yield,
I nothing wish that kings could give;
Where wild flowers paint the summer field,
Where sing wild song birds, let me live.
Or if my heart for grandeur pine,
With noble instinct let me go
Where Alps reveal the Power Divine,
Enthroned on everlasting snow.

II.

By Macugnaga's linden old,
At Monte Rosa's rocky feet,
I may true majesty behold,
And learn the lore for mortals meet.
Where silent glaciers grandly teach
The haughty heart abased to hide,
While thundering avalanches preach
The pettiness of human pride.

Sabbath Bells.

I.

HOSE Sabbath Bells, those Sabbath Bells,
How happy a tale their music tells,
Of Love and Peace and blood-blanch'd sin,
Of Christ around and Christ within.

II.

Yes! Christ is preached on every gale
That wafts your silver-echoing tale,
But chosen breasts he sweetly swells
With rarer songs, O Sabbath Bells!

III.


And when to Him our souls have gone,
While Earth's far chimes peal feebly on,
Those harps of glory where He dwells
Shall drown ten thousand thousand bells.

IV.

Then hush! blest heart, 'tis thine ere long
To swell that Heavenly choral song;
But now love's voice within thee knells,
Gently as Aaron's golden Bells!

Dove's Wings desired:

Ps. lv. 6.

 I WANT to slip, just slip away
Unto my gentle, loving Lord;
For life's cold, coarse, and dusty way
Nor rest nor flowers doth now afford.

II.

Time was when, blooming here and there,
Faith, Hope, and Love in clusters grew,
Fragrant in Joy's warm summer air,
Or sweetly steeped in sorrow's dew.

III.

But Faith lies crushed by giant Pride,
And Hope beneath Death's dust is trod,
And lingering Love at last hath sighed,
And sought once more the throne of God.

IV.

Time was when brethren valued high
The priceless preciousness of grace,
And in each other lovingly
Beheld the Saviour's loving face.

V.

Now critical and isolate,
If wrangling not, they coldly move.
I say not they each other hate;
I only say they do not love.

VI.

O Christ, O Christ, that heart of thine,
Tender and true, how deep it bled,
When man, despising love Divine,
Caused thee such awful tears to shed. Luke xix. 41.

VII.

Seems it the human breast can fence
Itself with hate as with a shield,
Till ev'n Divine omnipotence
Weeps and forsakes the dreadful field.


VIII.

Then let me slip, just slip away
Unto my gentle, loving Lord,
Since earth's cold, coarse, and dusty way
Nor rest nor flowers doth now afford.

Sound and Fruit.

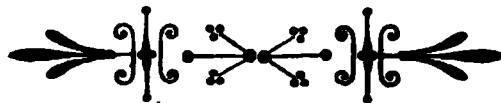
COL. i. 5-6.

I.

HE bells of gold on Aaron's robe
Sweet music rang, but not alone:
The rich pomegranate's swelling globe
Wove fruit and fragrance round the zone.

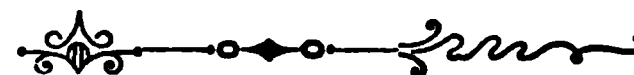
II.

So if thy life, dear Christian, flow
Harmonious as a golden song,
Grace shall her rich endowment show
By Love, Truth, beauty, more than tongue.



Meekness.

I.

 **T**HE violet in silence steeps
With odours rich her dewy bed,
And to her hiding closelier creeps
To breathe more sweetness as you tread;
While evermore the more she weeps
Are clouds of fresher fragrance shed.

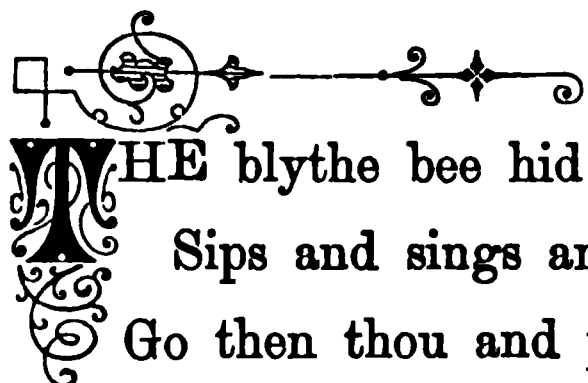
II.

Thus grace Divine most richly dwells
In hearts that glare and folly flee,
Deep drinking to their inmost cells
Heav'n's own choice dew, humility;
While forth new goodness gently wells
The more they bruised and meekened be.



The Soul of Work.

I.



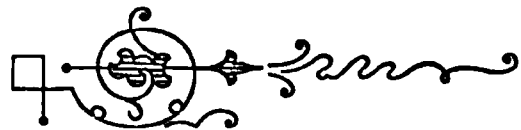
THE blythe bee hid in summer blossom,
Sips and sings and works apace;
Go then thou and pierce the bosom
Of the golden flower of grace.
Buried from the world in sweetness,
Drink Christ's nectar deep, and prove
How his nearness yields thee meetness,
How the soul of work—is Love.

II.

Flowers of promise, favours sunny,
All to thee are freely given;
Thine it is to take the honey,
Thine to drink these draughts of heaven—
Thine the joy true strength of duty
(Hireling service is abhorred),
Thine to revel in the beauty
That shall make thee like thy Lord.

Soubenir

Sent to a lady, with a little terra cotta vase, shaped like a heart,
and with a forget-me-not painted on the lid.



I.

HEMPTY, cold, hard, and little worth
For sending o'er the sea,
This paltry vase of Danish earth
May well appear to thee.

II.

And yet condemn not my design :
'Tis fable-wise to show
How earthly hearts, by grace Divine,
With heavenly sweets may flow.

III.

Fill then the toy with rich attar,
And noting memory's blossom,
Think what God's children were and are,
Till Christ inspire the bosom.

IV.

So, apt the humbling truth to teach,
This heart of clay may prove,
Yet with undying fragrance preach
Th' omnipotence of love.

Copenhagen, 1873.

NOTES.

NOTES.

LINE 35.—“ *The true intent of Solomon discern.*”

I am quite aware of the modern attempts to deny the Solomonic authorship of “Koheleth,” but I prefer to adhere to the tradition, notwithstanding the sufficiently dogmatic statements of Hebraistic scholars founded upon mere linguistic considerations. Delitzsch, it appears, has said that if “Koheleth” be attributed to Solomon, then we have no history of the Hebrew language. Perhaps not. But the loss is not ruinous if even so; and the history of the continuity of any language is perplexing in the absence of a continuously evidential literature. At all events the scholars differ amongst themselves to such an extent as to justify those who do not pretend to an infallible insight into Hebrew grammar, to withhold their assent from the new statement that contradicts the venerable tradition. There are other tests of authorship than mere words and grammar. The infinite variety of Shakespeare, if all authentic records were lost, would afford to linguistic critics a splendid field of speculation and dogmatism as to the existence of many Shakespeares. It may be well to note however, for the benefit of some readers, that in the opinion of some scholars, the denial of the actual authorship of “Koheleth” by Solomon himself, does not impugn the canonicity or inspiration of the book, nor impute forgery or fraud to the writer who dramatically personates the king. But this idea seems quite untenable.

LINE 55.—“ *Without the will of a presiding mind.*”

This naked doctrine of atheistical evolution has no doubt been advanced by some. To others it may, perhaps, not be fairly imputable

who stop short in a declaration of nescience as to any first or further cause, while admitting that Reason is brought to a stand-still at a certain point. At that point, Faith finds the Living God, while reason (so-called) stumbles in the dark.

The believer does not dispute the fact, which both experience and Scripture attest, that the Living God does work on a plan, and does use a process of development of things to which He has given existence, and a power controlled by the laws he has impressed on them. The acorn contains the oak, the egg contains the bird, and the infant child grows into the man. But the simple statement of Genesis commends itself to experience and reason, that Herb and Tree contained seed and fruit in itself, *each after its kind*. So the fish in the seas, and the winged fowl, and the cattle, creeping things, and beasts of earth, each and all were endowed with the power of reproduction "*after their kind*." The day is at hand, if not already arrived, when these simple statements of inspired truth will be implicitly accepted, and the jargon of the science that darkens counsel pass into oblivion and contempt.

LINE 74.—"*Developed so profoundly skilled a fool.*"

There is a "development" of moral qualities worthy of serious consideration, and full of awful interest. On the one hand we learn that "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Prov. iv. 18). "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger" (Job. xvii. 9). On the other hand, "Evil men wax worse and worse" (2 Tim. iii. 13). The tares and the wheat grow together until the harvest, but do not interchange their respective natures or destiny. Nor on the supposition of immortality, is there any reasonable ground for expecting a reversal of this law of order in the future. The thought is a solemn one, and suggests an eternal progress in goodness and happiness; as well, perhaps, as the awful counterpart, so painful to even contemplate, and which it is so rash to risk being found to be the terrible reality. Apart, however, from the question of eternal, and, possibly, eternally progressive wretchedness and misery hereafter, it is worth while to consider the perilous propensity of the sin of unbelief to develop itself more and more malignly until it reaches its logical goal in Atheism.

Conversion by Divine Power is the only hope in the case of perverts from right reason. Paul the Apostle was not developed from Saul ; he was made a new creature. And the Faith that regenerates is a new gift of God.

LINE 205.—“ *With stately pomp, Charles solemnly resigned.*”

“As this then appeared to be the proper juncture for executing the scheme which he had long meditated, Charles resolved to resign his kingdoms to his son, with a solemnity suitable to the importance of the transaction, and to perform this last act of Sovereignty with such formal pomp as might leave a lasting impression on the minds, not only of his subjects, but of his successor. * * * * Having assembled the States of the Low Countries at Brussels, on the 25th October, Charles seated himself, for the last time, in the chair of state, on one side of which was placed his son, and on the other his sister, the Queen of Hungary, Regent of the Netherlands, with a splendid retinue of the princes of the Empire and grandees of Spain standing behind him. The President of the Council of Flanders explained, in a few words by his command, his intention in calling this extraordinary meeting of the States. He then read the instrument of resignation by which Charles surrendered to his son Philip all his territories, jurisdiction, and authority in the Low Countries, absolving his subjects there from their oath of allegiance to him, which he required them to transfer to Philip, his lawful heir, and to serve him with the same loyalty and zeal which they had manifested during so long a course of years in support of his Government. * * * * A few weeks after this transaction, Charles, in an assembly no less splendid, and with a ceremony equally pompous resigned to his son the crowns of Spain with all the territories depending on them, both in the old and the new world. Of all these vast possessions, he reserved nothing for himself but an annual pension of 100,000 crowns, to defray the charges of his family, and to afford him a small sum for acts of beneficence and charity.”—*Robertson's "Charles V.," Book XI.*

LINE 211.—“ *The barren sequel let Plazencia tell.*”

“An illiberal and timid superstition depressed his spirit, he had no relish for amusements of any kind. He endeavoured to conform in his

manner of living to all the rigour of monastic severity. He desired no other society than that of monks, and was almost continually employed with them in chanting the hymns of the Missal. As an expiation for his sins he gave himself the discipline in secret with such severity, that the whip of cords which he employed as the instrument of his punishment, was found after his decease tinged with his blood.”—*Robertson’s “Charles the V.,” Book XII.*

LINE 705.—“*And feel the trickling of a grateful tear.*”

It was an observation frequently made in the Crimean War hospitals, that amidst the suffering throngs of the patients, murmurs or groans were rare or quite unknown. More honourable still, I think, to the soldier was the fact that the presence of the lady nurses acted as a sacred spell to banish all uncouth or improper utterances from the wards; and nothing offensive ever occurred, I believe, in their presence which was gratefully and respectfully regarded, as a singular manifestation of self-denying kindness.

LINE 745.—“*Its simple presence tenderest thought inspires.*”

I dug up from the battle field of Inkermann, an iris, which being transplanted to England, blossomed red, whether this was its original color or not I cannot determine, but I had expected a yellow flower, and it is no violent flight of fancy to imagine that the change was made by blood reaching the root.

LINE 945.—“*Where changeeful Nature’s reign shall pass away.*”

This seems indicated in Ps. cii. 26, 27, ; and Heb. i. 11, 12.

LINE 1048.—“*By that hid ladder.*”

Gen. xxiii. 12. John i. 51. Rev. iv.



NOTES TO SONNETS.

THE INTRODUCTION.

While a thoroughly Pagan, and to a large extent *Atheistic*, spirit pervades our popular literature, it may seem not very hopeful to attempt the task of rendering sacred subjects palatable—at least, beyond the hymnologies of the churches. I firmly believe, however, that a reaction

to truth and holiness will ensue in due season. And I have no doubt but that true genius could make the grand subjects of natural and revealed religion more generally available to promote and diffuse right sentiments than is ordinarily supposed or attempted. At all events, the literature of Christians, no less than their lives, should savour of the salt of their professed principles. Sermons and hymns for one day in the week have an uphill fight against the paganism of the other six days, unless our literature be more baptised into Christ.

NO. I. FIRST FRUITS.

This institution combines an interesting variety of valuable teaching. It was a standing testimony against atheism and that inveterate tendency of the human heart to rest in self and second causes. God is acknowledged as the good giver of the harvests of earth. St. Paul charges not ignorance, but criminality, upon the nations who refused to see the Creator in His works, and who were *unthankful* (Rom. i. 19, 21). He testified similarly in these striking words addressed to the Lycaonians: "Nevertheless, He left not Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness" (Acts xiv. 17). The boastful nineteenth century, in its agnostic pride, would do well to lay those beautiful truths to heart. But the sacrifice of the Lamb, on the day of the waving of the sheaf of first-fruit, intimated also that the earth, which was under the curse for sin, required the shedding of blood before enjoying the harvest fruits. And that pathetic passage (Deut. xxvi.) instituting the presentation of a basket of first-fruits at the altar of the Lord, with an acknowledgment of his undeserved goodness, remains to this day as a typical picture of unchanging duty too much neglected. That casket contained layers of the various fruits—figs, grapes, pomegranates, &c.—each laid carefully in order, and so specifically acknowledged as bountiful gifts. The lesson is beautifully perspicuous.

NO. II. NATURE.

It has been frequently observed, and it is an undoubted fact, that a very great and remarkable increase in the taste for natural beauty has ensued in the present century. The close of the great Napoleonic

wars by an interval of prolonged peace, and the coincident improvements which facilitated locomotion by steam and rail had probably much to do with the matter. The Rhine, as the highway to Switzerland, the Alps and Italy, became thronged with admirers prepared by the writings of poets and men of imagination to appreciate the beautiful and sublime in natural scenery. While, however, a general baptism of the public taste has thus been performed, and a kind of passion, when is it not plagiarised affectation, has been created by travel and poetry, the benefit is not unmixed with evil. Great atheistic poets have created an idol of the imagination, which has not satisfied the longing for an object of worship after all. Heart-broken despair is the ultimate result of their passionate adoration. Nothing can be more sad to a sensitive and intelligent mind than the spectacle of these gifted enthusiasts, the dismal moan of whose wailings recalls the thought of the misery of lost souls. But God has endowed man with a capacity of deriving delight from his own emotions, excited by the sublime and beautiful in Nature as representing the adorable loveliness of Nature's Author. Here Piety enjoys heaven, while Atheism gives a pretaste of Hell.

No. III. ATHEISM.

It has been demonstrated that Atheism is the logical goal of Naturalism, Pantheism, and Unbelief of every degree which refuses to acknowledge the Living God. It is, however, a perilous mistake to suppose that society or human happiness can rest on Atheism as a final principle of belief, *and stop there*. Morality, truth, justice, marriage, property, and liberty are simply impossibilities without God. When men and nations lose sight of this truth, danger is at hand and ruin sure.

No. IV. THE NAME OF JEHOVAH.

Accustomed as we have been for ages to this form of the sacred Tetragrammaton, there is something unpleasant in the needless change insisted on by some modern critics. Nor do they agree exactly among themselves, for while one writes Jahve, another will have Jahaveh, and others something else still. I hope and believe that our language will retain the sacred name as JEHOVAH in popular use, disregarding the criticism which looks very like mere pedantry, whether authoritative or not.

No. VI. JEHOVAH ROPHI.

Our blessed Lord went about teaching, preaching the gospel, and healing diseases. Thus he met with remedial help the three great needs of mankind—*Ignorance, unhappiness, and bodily suffering*. It is delightful to contemplate Jesus as the Great Physician, whose mission was to heal the broken-hearted in every sense.

No. VIII. JEHOVAH SHALOM.

Such a sight of a little chubby fellow, weary and overcome with heat, and his hand full of gathered cowslips, lying asleep upon a green bank, made a picture not to be forgotten. A painter would have been glad to behold it.

No. X. JEHOVAH SHAMMAH.

We live here in faith, and faith is to be lost in sight. This is an accepted truth ; but perhaps the superiority of faith to sight, *while here*, has been somewhat permitted to obscure our conception of the absolute superiority of sight hereafter. It is well to avoid misconception or exaggeration upon this subject. The *Vision of God* is to be our ultimate and supreme joy. Even now and here the actual sight of a beautiful or sublime object has an influence and power far beyond what the description or even the memory of it can exert. Heaven is not set before us as a place merely in which our contemplations and internal peace make happiness. We are to see a glorious object. And the very sight is to have a transforming effect, we are to be made like Christ by seeing Him as He is. What the nature of this vision may be or how it is to operate we cannot at present know. Moses, Ezekiel, Daniel, Paul, had glimpses of it. But whatever it be essentially, it is by our beholding of it that we are to be beautified and assimilated to it.

No. XVI. MOUNT NEBO.

There is much worthy of consideration about the burial of Moses, or disappearance of his body—a subject scarcely treated by writers with satisfactory results. It is worth observing, that if Moses had consented to be esteemed the son of Pharaoh's daughter, his body would have been embalmed and deposited in a Royal Pyramid. Thus,

according to the strange Egyptian notion, it would have been preserved as the receptacle for the restored immortal spirit. He was, however, the teacher and example of a truer immortality, and his appearance on Tabor with Elijah and Jesus has more significance than seems generally noticed.

In my book on the 49th Psalm, "*Almüth*," I have adopted the rendering of all the ancient versions of verse 11, "*Their tombs are their houses for ever, their mansions to all generations.*" This, I have no doubt (and not "*Their inward thought is,*" &c.) is the true rendering of the Hebrew. And, possibly, the strange word, "*Adamoth*," in that Psalm had a reference to the Pyramids.



BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

ALMÜTH: The Messianic Enigma of the 49th Psalm.

NISBET & CO., 21, BERNERS STREET, LONDON; W.

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